



MEDICINE INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

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Editors' Desk

In a recently released rank list of world's healthiest countries, Spain ranked at number one position. Spain has moved up beating previous topper, Italy. Unfortunately, we find our country ranked at 120th position just above the Pakistan. Compared to 2017 ranking India slipped from 119th to 120th. Japan is identified as number one among the Asian countries and positioned at 4th position in global index. Bloomberg, a London based organization has ranked the 169 countries based on the data of World Health Organization, United Nations Population Division and World Bank. Though there are many factors which contribute to the ranks, Life Expectancy at Birth; Risk factors like Tobacco Use and Obesity are major contributors. Surprisingly in South East Asia, our neighboring countries are better placed than India: Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal are at 66th, 91st and 110th position respectively. This is a cause of concern! It is time for the policy makers to look into the best practices of the healthiest countries and attempt to replicate. It is also appropriate to invest more in

sustainable health care to translate Ayushman Bharat to Ayushman Bhava!

The 'Jan Aushadi' Diwas' was celebrated on 7th March to create awareness on the Generic Medicines. This is a welcome move. But people are confused what is a generic medicine and it requires to be defined in our Drugs Laws. Confidence building on quality of generic medicine, exclusive stores like Jan Aushadhi in large numbers across the country, writing prescription in generic name are primary requirements for promoting generic medicines. Generic medicines throughout the world are viewed as a strategy to improve access to medicines. Dispensing generic medicines is illegal if the prescription presented is on brand. The substitution needs to be made legal.

Hope the readers would find this issue informative and useful. We shall be happy to receiving readers' continuing patronage and constructive feedback.

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Quote

He is the best physician that knows the worthlessness of the most medicines.

Benjamin Franklin, 1733

Courses

WHO E-Learning course on Investigation of Adverse Event Following Immunisation: The ultimate goal of an adverse event following immunisation (AEFI) investigation is to find the cause of the event and to implement follow-up actions when required. Investigation should identify any immunization error-related reactions because these are preventable. Acknowledging that the cause of a large proportion of AEFI cannot be established by AEFI causality assessment. WHO has launched an E-learning course on AEFI investigation focussing on: when to launch an investigation, what information is required to successfully complete an investigation and successfully managing inter-personal communication with relevant stake holders. The course can be accessed at one's own pace at:

<http://www.vaccine-safety-training.org/investigation/>

International Master's program Infectiology, University of Health Sciences, Phnom Penh, Cambodia: LSH Master's program International track Infectiology, offered by Paris Saclay University, University of Health Sciences of Cambodia, Institut Pasteur du Cambodge and Institut Pasteur Paris are now inviting application. The students need to apply before 21st April 2019. The details are available at Université Paris Saclay's website: <https://www.universite-paris-saclay.fr/fr/formation/master/m1-life-sciences-and-health-international-track-infectiology-cambodia#presentation-m1>

Opportunities

TDR Post Graduate Scholarship: The Office of Research, Innovation and Development (ORID), University of Ghana and the University of Zambia, School of Public Health, invite interested candidates to apply for a TDR Postgraduate Scholarship offered for the academic year 2019/2020. The scholarship recipients will conduct their thesis projects on Implementation Research on infectious diseases of poverty, including neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), malaria and Tuberculosis. Recipients will be enrolled as postgraduate students. The interested person may look into the following links: University of Ghana: <https://www.who.int/tdr/grants/calls/cfa-ghana-2019.pdf> and University of Zambia: <https://www.who.int/tdr/grants/calls/2019-UNZA-SoPH.pdf>. The last date of application is 30th April 2019.

Important Health Days

April 6	Irritable bowel syndrome awareness day
April 7	World health day
April 11	World Parkinson's disease day
April 17	World Hemophilia day
April 24	World Meningitis day
April 25	World Malaria day
April 28	International day of Immunology
May 1	World Asthma day
May 5	World Hand hygiene day
May 8	World Thalassaemia day & World Red Cross day
May 10	World lupus day
May 17	World Hypertension day
May 20	World Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory Arthritis day
May 28	International day of action for Women's Health
May 29	World Digestive Health day
May 30	World Multiple Sclerosis (MS) day
May 31	World No Tobacco day
June 2	International cancer survivors day
June 5	World environment day
June 7	Tourette's awareness day
June 8	World brain tumor day
June 14	World blood donor day
June 19	World sickle cell day
June 21	International day of yoga
June 25	World Vitiligo day
June 26	International day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking

Focus: Benzodiazepines

Benzodiazepines are sedative and hypnotic drugs widely used to treat anxiety and insomnia. The commonly used benzodiazepines are: Alprazolam, Chlordiazepoxide, Clonazepam, Clorazepate, Diazepam, Estazolam, Flurazepam, Lorazepam, Midazolam, Oxazepam, Quazepam, Temazepam and Triazolam. They cause several adverse effects: unsteady gait, dizziness, falls, memory problems, other cognitive impairments and day time sedation. Falls may lead to hip fracture and other injuries.

Long term use of benzodiazepine may lead to addiction, psychological and physical dependence which can result in withdrawal symptoms. The withdrawal symptoms include insomnia, restlessness and anxiety, especially the drug is suddenly stopped. The independent research group discouraged the use of benzodiazepine for insomnia, anxiety or any other use. However, alprazolam may be used for only panic disorder and clonazepam may be used only for certain types of seizures and panic disorders.

During stopping of benzodiazepine, gradual tapering of dose over several weeks is recommended to reduce the risk of severe withdrawal symptoms.

Conferences

International Conference on Prevention & Infection Control (ICPIC) 2019: The fifth International Conference on Prevention & Infection Control is scheduled to be held on 10-13 September 2019, celebrating the 10th year anniversary of ICPIC. The conference offers unique opportunities to exchange knowledge and experience in the prevention of healthcare associated infections and control of antimicrobial resistance around the world. The last date of submission of abstract is: 29th May 2019. More details can be seen at: <https://www.conference.icpic.com/abstracts/call-for-abstracts/>

79th FIP World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences: The 79th World Congress, organized by International Pharmaceutical Federation, is scheduled during 22-26 September 2019 at Abu Dhabi, UAE. The abstract needs to be submitted before 01st May 2019. More details are available at: <https://abudhabi2019.congress.pharmacy/call-for-abstracts/>

ISPOR Europe 2019: International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research (ISPOR) Europe 2019 Conference offers opportunities to meet professionals in the field of health economics and outcomes research field, discuss the latest trend and learn from renowned experts. The last date of submission of abstract is 12th June 2019. More details can be accessed at: <https://www.ispor.org/conferences-education/conferences/upcoming-conferences/ispor-europe-2019/abstract-submission>

The 26th Cochrane Colloquium, Santiago 2019: This year's theme is 'Embracing diversity', recognizing Cochrane as a truly global independent community, addressing relevant health questions from international stakeholders using a range of diverse methods. The notification for abstract submission is issued and the deadline for submissions is 12 April 2019. More details are available at: <https://colloquium2019.cochrane.org/call-abstracts>

Did You Know?

Dr. Yellapragada Subbarow, an India born Scientist, is known for discovery / synthesis of three important medicines: Methotrexate, cure for cancer; Aureomycin, broad spectrum first tetracycline; and Diethylcarbamazine, a cure for filaria.

Websites of Interest

Children for Health: Children for Health is dedicated to the promotion of health education in developing countries, focused on developing children as agents of change and communicators of essential health messages in their families and communities. Health Education materials are available in many Indian languages: Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Kannada, Konkani, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Tamil and Telugu. These materials can be accessed free at <https://www.childrenforhealth.org/other-languages/>

Pat-INFORMED: The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in collaboration with the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations (IFPMA) launched the Patent Information Initiative For Medicines (Pat-INFORMED) a database of medicines patents. The details can be accessed at: <https://medicineslawandpolicy.org/2018/09/wipo-and-pharma-industry-launch-global-medicines-patent-database/>

New Drugs Approved in India

S. No.	Name of the Drug	Indication	Date of Issue
1.	Fimasartan potassium trihydrate bulk drug and Fimasartan film coated tablets 30mg/60mg/120mg	For the treatment of mild hypertension	22.11.2018
2.	Sacubitril/Valsartan (as sodium salt complex) and FDC of Sacubitril + Valartan 50 (24+26)/100 (49+51)/200 (97+103) mg film coated tablets	To reduce the risk of cardiovascular death and hospitalization for heart failure in patients with chronic heart failure (NYHA Class II-IV) and reduced ejection fraction	24.12.2018
3.	Fenspiride hydrochloride film coated extended release tablet 80 mg and Fenspiride hydrochloride bulk	1.Acute Rhinosinusitis 2.Moderate persistent asthma as an add-on therapy	04.02.2019
4.	Bilastine tablets 20 mg and Bilastine Bulk	For symptomatic treatment of allergic rhino-conjunctivitis (seasonal) and perennial) and urticaria in adults	06.02.2019
5.	Iguratimod film coated tablets 25mg and Iguratimod Bulk	For the treatment of active rheumatoid arthritis symptoms	18.02.2019

NEWS

Commonly used medical devices are notified as drugs: Nebulisers, Blood pressure monitoring devices, Digital thermometers, and Glucometers are brought under the control of Drugs and Cosmetics Act with effect from January 2020. Earlier Government notified CT and MRI scan equipments, Defibrillators, Dialysis machine, PET equipment, X-Ray machine, and bone marrow separator as drugs. With notification as drugs, the manufacturers and importers are required to seek regulatory permission to sell them in the country. Though they will be governed by Medical Device Rules 2017, the present notification may help Government to bring them under price control mechanism.

Buclizine – as Appetite Stimulant – Prohibited from use: The Government of India has prohibited the distribution and sale of Buclizine as an appetite stimulant. However, its use as antihistamine is allowed to be marketed for symptomatic treatment of various allergic conditions (rhinitis, conjunctivitis, and urticaria) and for prevention and treatment of motion sickness.

Oxytocin Availability: The Delhi High Court has set aside a Government of India (GOI) order restraining private companies from manufacturing and selling oxytocin. The court observed that it is an essential life-saving drug. Earlier, the GOI had restricted the manufacture oxytocin formulations for domestic use to public sector, Karnataka Antibiotics and Pharmaceuticals Limited only. This was aimed to checking the misuse of oxytocin, a reproductive hormone, used during labour and to stimulate ejection of

milk into ducts of breasts.

Ace Proxyvon Ban Stayed: The Wockhardt Company's anti-inflammatory medicine 'Ace Proxyvon' is back to the chemists' shelf for use. Ace Proxyvon is a Fixed Dose Combination product containing Aceclofenac, Paracetamol and Rabeprazol. This FDC was banned earlier along with many other FDCs by the Central Government. The Delhi Court has set aside the Centre's notification banning the manufacturing and sale of 'Ace Proxyvon' promoted for use in painful rheumatic conditions.

Ban of Combikit of Azithromycin, Secnidazole and Fluconazole Set Aside: The Delhi High Court has set aside the banning of combikit of Azithromycin, Secnidazole and Fluconazole. The combikit is a convenient package containing three separate drugs and is recommended for syndromic management and treatment of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Each individual formulation operates as an antibacterial, anti-fungal and anti-trichomonal treatment. The court observed that tablets are packaged in a single strip and sold as the Combikit. The petitioner is licensed to manufacture each of the said formulation; the batch number of each of the drugs is separate and is separately written on the strip as well as on the box in which the strip is packed. Similarly, the date of manufacture and expiry of each of these tablets has been separately printed. Hence, it does not fall under the definition of FDC.

Resources

Disabled Village Children: This is an essential reference manual for family members, caregivers, and teachers of children with disabilities, especially in communities with limited resources. It addresses a wide range of conditions, including congenital and genetic disorders and those caused by childhood illnesses, injuries, or malnutrition. The guide contains methods for community-based rehabilitation in low-resource settings, as well as strategies for daily living and therapeutic exercises to increase children's skills. Step-by-step illustrations make it easy to follow. The manual can be freely accessed at: http://en.hesperian.org/hhg/Disabled_Village_Children?utm_source=Community+rehab+classic+now+online+-+10.30.18&utm_campaign=Community+rehab+classic+now+online+-+10.30.18&utm_medium=email

Guidelines for Handling of Palliative Care Medicines in Community Services: The guidelines may be used by community service providers to develop detailed protocols and procedures tailored to the requirements of their individual service or facilities. Such protocols and procedures support health professionals in the practice of handling and administering medicine to palliative care patients living at home. The guidelines are helpful for the handling of medicines by individuals and staff of community service providers. This document can be downloaded from:

<https://www.caringathomeproject.com.au/Portals/13/Documents/NPS-Palliative-Care-Guidelines-v16-jg-171018-ACC.PDF>

Alerts [WHO Pharmaceuticals Newsletter, No. 5, 2018]

Oseltamivir has the potential risk of abnormal behaviour: The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Government of Japan has instructed to include the information in package inserts of reports of severe abnormal behaviour (falls) in male school age children taking oseltamivir. It has been used for the treatment of acute, uncomplicated illness due to influenza A and B infection. It has revised its earlier warning of contraindication for use in patients aged 10 to 19 years. The government has softened the warning as no conclusive association between the use of oseltamivir and abnormal behaviours.

Methotrexate associated with risk of teratogenicity: Oral methotrexate has been indicated for the treatment of active rheumatoid arthritis, adult psoriasis, and in a number of oncology related conditions. The Health Products Regulatory Authority of Ireland has issued instruction to include the information of its association with teratogenicity in package inserts. It is contraindicated for use during pregnancy and lactation. Women are advised not to become pregnant while taking methotrexate and effective contraception should be used throughout treatment and for at least six months after treatment cessation. Male patients are also advised to use reliable contraception while on medication with methotrexate.

Ceftriaxone associated with risk of convulsions and involuntary movements: Ceftriaxone is active against microorganisms of genera: Streptococcus, Pneumococcus, and Escherichia coli. It is indicated for the treatment of bacterial infections such as sepsis, pharyngitis, tonsillitis and acute bronchitis. Based on the reports of neuropsychiatric symptoms associated with the use of ceftriaxone, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan, has revised the information in package inserts. Neuropsychiatric symptoms such as convulsions and involuntary movements are included as adverse reactions.

Fluoroquinolones have increased risk of ruptures or tears in Aorta Blood Vessel [https://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/SafetyInformation/SafetyAlertsforHumanMedicalProducts/ucm628960.htm?utm_campaign=FDA%20MedWatch%20-%20Fluoroquinolone%20Antibiotics&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Eloqua]: Fluoroquinolone antibiotics can increase the occurrence of rare but serious events of ruptures or tears in the main artery of the body, called the aorta. These tears, called aortic dissections, or ruptures of an aortic aneurysm can lead to dangerous bleeding or even death. They can occur with fluoroquinolones for systemic use given by mouth or through an injection. The prescribers should avoid prescribing fluoroquinolone antibiotics to patients who have an aortic aneurysm or are at risk for an aortic aneurysm, such as patients with peripheral atherosclerotic vascular diseases, hypertension, certain genetic conditions such as Marfan syndrome and Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, and elderly patients. Similarly, patients should be encouraged to seek medical attention immediately if they experience sudden, severe, and constant pain in the stomach, chest or back.

Isotretinoin – Box Warning: The National Drugs Regulatory Authority (DCGI) has advised that the package should have a box warning “This medicine may cause severe birth defects; you must not take this medicine if you are pregnant or may likely become pregnant during treatment’ and ‘you should also avoid pregnancy for six months after stopping the treatment”. The communication also urges the State Drugs Control authorities to ensure the sale only on prescription of dermatologist only. Isotretinoin capsule 10 mg / 20 mg is approved for treatment of cystic and conglobate acne, severe nodular acne unresponsive to antibiotic therapy.



Inaugural Function



Valedictory Function



A View of Delegates

A Panoramic View of ISPOR Sponsored National Seminar on Health Economics and Outcomes Research: An Indian Perspective - 8th and 9th Feb 2019



ISPOR Student Chapter Members on Antimicrobial Resistance Campaign Educating the School Children [January 2019]



Dr. S.Parimalakrishnan and Dr. R. Murali, Faculty Members, at 2nd Global Public Health Conference at Colombo held on 14th and 15th February 2019

DISCLAIMER:

The Newsletter intends to provide updated and reliable information on medicines and other related issues in an attempt to equip healthcare professionals to take informed decision in recommending medicines to the patients. However, they are encouraged to validate the contents. None of the people associated with the publication of the Newsletter nor the University shall be responsible for any liability for any damage incurred as a result of use of contents of this publication. The brand names of medicines, if mentioned, are for illustration only and the Newsletter does not endorse them.