

## Holistic quality enhancement is the need of the hour: 70th Indian Pharmaceutical Congress

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With the aim of sharing best practices to aid the domestic industry become a world leader by 2030, the three-day 70<sup>th</sup> Indian Pharmaceutical Congress was organized at the Amity University Campus, NOIDA recently.

It was inaugurated by Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President of India. More than 60 speakers from both India and abroad participated in the power-packed panel discussions on the critical topics like Over-The-Counter drug regulation, risk and safety in the era of multi-drug resistant microbial strains, the challenges people face in accessing quality diagnostic services, the relationship between the pharmacist – as the first point of contact – and the patient and how the menace of fake medicines can be curbed.

Atul Nasa, Head of Office/ Controlling Authority, Drugs Control Department, Delhi, said on the occasion, “The coming months will see stricter implementation of quality standards and increased awareness of the risks of online pharmacy. OTC drugs need greater regulation to prevent unmonitored use and abuse”.

BR Sikri, Chairman, LOC of 70<sup>th</sup> IPC said, “No other country in the world is able to supply affordable medicines to the world at affordable prices than India. The interaction between regulating authorities and top CEOs of industry will ensure that there is a more congenial interface between industry and the government to promote smoother access of life-saving medicines to all our people.”

Whereas the Indian diagnostics market was a \$ 9.6 million industry, just under 20% of Indians have ever given their blood for testing while Tier III & IV towns are deprived of quality diagnostic facilities. However, the government is fully geared to increase healthcare spending from 1.3% of the GDP to 2.5% of the GDP by 2025.

Tele-pathology could play a great role in reducing costs of diagnostics in such cases. Increased penetration of health insurance can also play a pivotal role in increasing diagnostic access. Diagnosis was now moving from simple intervention to real-time monitoring and predictive markers. Hence, it offers vast employment opportunities to young and passionate learners.

The Panel Discussion on Over-the-Counter drug retail and regulation, threw up crucial points such as the dangers of self-medication and the need to raise awareness of the rules concerning OTC medicine delivery and consumption.

Dr. R Chandershekhar, Deputy Drugs Controller (I), CDSCO, stressed on the importance of compliance, safety and risk control standards in the age of e-pharmacy and online pharmacy.

India exports pharmaceutical products to over 180 countries around the globe, of which, 30% goes to the US alone. While India's drug industry is set to grow at 13%, the same sector in the US was growing at just 3%. For the first time, India exported drugs worth \$ 17 billion – a huge achievement. In the next 10 years, India's pharma trade will be worth \$ 200 billion which speaks for the efficacy of India-made drugs in the world.