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Diabetes, cardiac drugs will be cheaper by 35 percent

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National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has fixed the prices of 108 formulation packs of 50 anti-diabetic and cardiovascular medicines, including those which are not listed under the national list of essential medicines (NLEM). Prices of 652 drugs under NLEM were fixed by the government last year under DPCO 2013.

This will help in savings for patients prescribed expensive chronic therapies. About Rs 5,500 crore of the pharma market will be impacted, with the range of prices being reduced from 10-15 percent to as high as 35 percent, with the average reduction around 12 percent.

The move has surprised the pharma industry. Indian Pharma Alliance's secretary general Mr D G Shah said that the NPPA has gone beyond essentiality as a criterion, and into policy-making, and price fixation, making the NLEM redundant.

The regulator says that the new law allows NPPA to fix and revise price caps of drugs in public interest, and this clause applies to both drugs which are part of the NLEM, and those outside of it.

Recently, NPPA had decided to monitor prices of all drug brands in critical therapies like cancer, HIV, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and tuberculosis. These could also be medicines which are a part of chronic treatments and exorbitantly-priced brands.

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