

## Azad: No spurious drug imported since 2010

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The imported cases of spurious and sub-standard drugs on the notice of the government during the last three years and the current year have decreased considerably. The information to this effect was provided by the Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad in the parliament on March 08, 2013.

The health ministry data has revealed that during 2009-10, the spurious drugs reported were seven in number. At the same time, the sub-standard drugs were 35, which continued to be the same in 2010-11. Again in 2011-12, 34 drugs were found to be sub-standard. During 2013, there were 18 cases of such drugs reported as sub-standard. Between 2010 to early 2013, there was not a single case of spurious drugs that was reported in the country.

The first meeting of the Member State Mechanism (MSM) on Sub-standard/Spurious/Falsely-labeled/Falsified/Counterfeit (SSFFC) medical products met from November 19-21, 2012 in Buenos Aires. The meeting decided to establish an open-ended working group to identify the actions, activities and behaviors that result in SSFFC medical products.

In order to actively participate in the working group, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare set up a cell comprising three experts in the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission on January 15, 2013 to address the issues pertaining to strengthening international cooperation for harmonization of practices on SSFFC.

"The quality of the drugs imported into the country is regulated under the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules made there under, through a system of registration, import license and checking of the consignments at the time of their import at the designated ports. Drugs found spurious and sub-standard are not permitted to be released for import by the customs authorities. The cases of import of spurious drugs in 2009-10 were investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and prosecutions launched on the basis of evidences available as per the provisions of law," said the minister.