

## **Fear of drug resistance**

### **Why in news?**

\n\n

Union health ministry has eased norms on the sale of the antiviral medicines used to treat H1N1 (swine flu) to make them more widely available.

\n\n

### **What are schedule X and schedule H1 drugs?**

\n\n

\n

- Drugs under Schedule X require three copies of prescription for the doctor, patient and chemist.

\n

- They are to be sold by a chemist who holds a special Schedule X licence.

\n

- Schedule H1 drug requires only one copy of the prescription and they can be sold by all chemists.

\n

\n\n

### **What is the current move?**

\n\n

\n

- Oseltamivir and Zanamivir are antiviral drugs that block the actions of influenza virus types A and B in the body.

\n

- During the H1N1 pandemic in 2009, the health ministry put these antiviral medicines in the Schedule X category of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules.

\n

- They are now taken off the restrictive Schedule X and placed under Schedule H1.

\n

- This move is made to provide better access to these medicines.

\n

\n\n

## **What is the concern?**

\n\n

\n

- India is already concerned of antibiotic resistance and related hazards.
- e.g Multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB).
- Medical experts now believe that the unrestricted availability of these antiviral drugs could lead to more casual use which eventually leads to severe drug resistance.

\n

\n\n

## **Quick Facts**

\n\n

### **H1N1**

\n\n

Influenza A(H1N1) virus is the subtype of influenza A virus that was the most common cause of human influenza in 2009. *H1N1* flu is also known as swine flu.

\n\n

## **Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945**

\n\n

It is an act of the Parliament of India which contains provisions for classification of drugs under given schedules and there are guidelines for the storage, sale, display and prescription of each schedule.

\n\n

## **Drug resistance**

\n\n

Antimicrobial resistance occurs when microorganisms such as bacteria,

viruses, fungi and parasites change in ways that render the medications used to cure the infections they cause ineffective.

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n

