

Making Generic Drugs Compulsory

Why in news?

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PM had recently said that the government is contemplating a law that will make it **binding for doctors to prescribe generic medicines.**

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What is the proposed move?

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- The proposed legislation has the potential of offering the patient a greater say in the choice of a medicine.

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- Making it obligatory on the doctor to prescribe a generic drug would mean that the prescription will detail the medicine's composition.

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- It would leave the choice of the brand on the patient.

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What should be done?

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- For this to be effective, the proposed law needs to **go beyond the doctor-patient binary** and target each link in the pharma industry's chain of corruption.

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- E.g. there are more than 500 generic versions for the anti-bronchial pneumonia formula, amoxicillin and potassium clavulanate, that cost between Rs 70 to Rs 300 for a packet of 10 tablets.

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- A patient with a prescription detailing the composition of the medicine could still be dependent on a pharmacist to make the most suitable drug choice.

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- Also a pharmacist is less likely to be sensitive to a patient's medical and

financial condition than the doctor.

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- Therefore the **pharmacists should also be brought under its ambit.**

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- The generic medicine industry should also be revamped. Last year, 27 commonly-used medicines in the country failed quality tests.

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- Currently in most cases, failure to comply with standards results only in a short-term suspension of a manufacturer's production licence. Effective deterrents should be formulated.

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- Adequate regulations, **ample drug inspectors** and lab facilities to check drug quality should be provided to ensure quality.

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- The move needs to be backed by adequate regulatory and legal provisions.

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Source: The Indian Express

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