

Anti-microbial resistance gonorrhoea

424. SHRI N. GOKULAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the World Health Organization has said that antibiotic resistance is making gonorrhoea, much harder and sometimes impossible to treat, citing data from 77 countries, including India, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that India is a part of the 77 countries and has been coordinating with the Anti-microbial Resistance (AMR) in gonorrhoea in South Asia Region, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI ANUPRIYA PATEL): (a) Yes, World Health Organisation (WHO) has cited data from 77 countries stating that antibiotic resistance is making gonorrhoea harder to treat in some countries. However, in India Syndromic management (cefixime + azithromycin), which is used to treat gonococcal infections is still effective and resistance has not much increased for the above two antibiotics.

(b) Yes, India is part of 77 countries and has been coordinating with Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in gonorrhoea in South East Asia Region. The Regional Reference Laboratory for WHO Global Gonococcal Antimicrobial Surveillance Programme (GASP) in South-East Asia Region is located at Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi.

Preventing misuse of H1N1 medicines

425. SHRI N. GOKULAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the easier access to H1N1 medicines raises fears of drug resistance;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government has advised doctors to prescribe the drugs based on strong symptoms without opting for the swab test; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that doctors feel misuse will lead to a situation of antiviral medications turning ineffective, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI ANUPRIYA PATEL): (a) No, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has recently (February 2017) placed Oseltamivir (the drug used to treat H1N1

influenza) under schedule H-1 of the drugs and cosmetics act after due recommendation by the Drug and Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) from the earlier schedule X in order to ensure wider availability and accessibility. However even under Schedule H-1, the drug can only be sold under valid prescription of a qualified doctor only. So the sale is still regulated and there should not be any threat of drug resistance.

(b) Yes. In order to rationalize and optimize the use of laboratory facilities, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had issued guidelines for the Categorization of cases and only cases fitting into Category C (Cases with Severe illness) needed to be subjected to Laboratory testing and rest of the cases could be treated without lab confirmation based on strong clinical epidemiological suspicion.

(c) No, as on now, there is no evidence to suggest that making antiviral medications available under schedule-H-1 have made the medications ineffective.

Achieving objective of pictorial health warning

426. DR. KANWAR DEEP SINGH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sale and supply of spurious cigarettes has increased in the country in recent years;

(b) if so, reasons therefor and details thereof for last three years; and

(c) whether the objective with which increased size of pictorial health warning was introduced has been achieved, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI ANUPRIYA PATEL): (a) and (b) As informed by Central Board of Excise and Customs, Department of Revenue, no such study has been conducted by them.

(c) Larger health warnings with pictures are more likely to be noticed, better communicate health risks, provoke a greater emotional response and increase the motivation of tobacco users to quit and to decrease their tobacco consumption.

As per the key findings/highlights of Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS-2) India 2016-17, 61.9% of current cigarette smokers, 53.8% of current bidi smokers and 46.2% of current smokeless tobacco users thought about quitting because of warning label on packets of cigarette, bidi and smokeless tobacco in comparison to 38.0%, 29.3% and 33.8% respectively in GATS-1 India 2009-10.