GOVERNMENT FINALIZES NEW DRUG PRICING MECHANISM

A new pricing mechanism has been drawn up at the crucial Group of Ministers (GoM) meeting held in Delhi leading to further decrease in prices of several low-priced drugs. The new formula will take into account “the simple average method” for determining the ceiling price of all the drugs under a particular therapeutic area as against the “weighted average” method. Initial estimates suggest that the average price reduction on the three hundred forty eight essential drugs may be around 25 - 30 percent.

WHO RELAXES RULES ON INDIA MADE MENINGITIS VACCINE

In a major advancement, WHO has made it possible for an India made Meningitis vaccine called MenAfriVac. The vaccine can be transported or stored at temperatures of upto forty degrees Celsius and for four days, without refrigeration. The vaccine was manufactured by Serum Institute of India Ltd (SIIL) to combat Meningococcal A epidemics in Africa. It has been able to greatly reduce disease burden in the countries that have introduced it. MenAfriVac costs as low as $ 0.50 per dose. This welcome move from WHO is expected to increase not only the campaign efficiency and coverage, but also to cut down on costs required to maintain the cold chain.

CLINICAL ESTABLISHMENT ACT SOON TO COVER MAHARASHTRA AND OTHER STATES TO FOLLOW

The Centre has long been prodding all states to adopt the Clinical Establishment (Registration and Regulation) Act, which makes registration mandatory for establishments providing medical treatment or facilities. UP, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Jharkhand have already implemented the act in 2010. Soon, the steps will be taken to implement it in Maharashtra as well. According to health Department officials, the legislation will help the Government have a complete data of all health facilities and will help to draft policies further.

VACCINE AGAINST DENGUE TO BE TESTED IN INDIA

The world's most effective vaccine candidate against Dengue is all set for trials in India. It will be tested on 120 odd adults at the start and the results should be available.
by 2013. The vaccine will hit the markets globally by 2015. The phase II safety trials will be conducted on adults first before testing the candidate vaccine on children.

**HEALTHY WORKPLACE PROGRAMME** LAUNCHED IN INDIA TO PREVENT NCDS

WHO says that approximately eighty percent of heart diseases and Diabetes, and forty percent of Cancers, can be prevented through a healthy lifestyle. A US based non-profit organization, AROGYA WORLD, launched their first step called “Healthy Workplace Programme” with Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI). The programme will help in reducing burden of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs), promote workplace wellness and would provide the opportunity to companies to have a competitive edge through increased talent retention and higher productivity.

**GLOBAL NEWS**

**UN OFFICIALS HELD MEETING TO APPLAUD PROGRESS IN MATERNAL CHILD NUTRITION**

Top level political and private sector officials met with UN Secretary - General, Ban Ki-moon in New York to fight against childhood and maternal under nutrition. They praised the progress made so far in maternal and child health under Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and stressed upon the importance of continued efforts to work in this field. This movement works for the children suffering from stunted growth due to chronic malnutrition. It has been joined by thirty countries including newest members, Burundi and Kenya.

**DEBATE ON ACHIEVEMENT OF MDGS**

A debate on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was recently called by Liberal Democrat Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne. Mr. David Cameron, one of the peers in the debate, stated that there is a “real opportunity” to end extreme poverty globally within next few decades. Debate concluded that progress on the MDGs has been patchy till date. The first MDG – reducing poverty has been achieved among some of the very poorest countries, due to increased income in China and India. He added that there is a need to focus on reducing corruption and promoting the rights of women & minorities.

**$1.5 BILLION INITIATIVE FROM UN TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL EDUCATION**

Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, announced $1.5 billion in commitments for a new initiative “Education First” for children worldwide. UN member countries, private companies and foundations have mobilized resources for this initiative, which will focus on three priorities over the next five years. These priorities are enrolling every child in school, improving the quality of learning and fostering global citizenship
through education. The Western Union Foundation and the Master Card Foundation are the private sector organizations that pledged to give grants.

**RECENT RESEARCHES**

**LUNG-ON-A-CHIP PASSES A CRUCIAL TEST**

A study published in the journal ‘Science Translational Medicine’ states that the ‘lung-on-a-chip’ technology is capable of exactly simulating a life-threatening lung condition as well as testing candidate drugs. Researchers involved in the study further state that this technology can reveal new aspects of the disease, something that would not be possible with animal experiments. This presents a ray of hope for future drug testing and understanding diseases in a whole new way.

**DOCTORS CRACK “HOSPITAL SUPERBUG” MRSA’S GENETIC CODE**

A study published in the “Lancet - Infectious Disease” states that UK doctors have brought an end to an outbreak in a hospital at Cambridge, by cracking the causative bacterium’s genetic code. The bacterium was spreading bugs in the patients’ bodies. Genetic code of the bug from all the infected patients and the staff members were compared to form a family tree. The patients were subsequently treated. This research was the first of its kind, where genome sequencing has brought an outbreak to a close.
October 4, 2012 witnessed a special occasion in the regular academic schedule of the institution, a guest lecture by Dr James W Turpin, the founder of Project Concern International (PCI). He addressed the audience on ‘Social Entrepreneurship - The way ahead’. During his lecture Dr Turpin shared the turning points, milestones he touched and his realization in his journey through 84 years of his exuberant and explorative life. He elicited a rapturous laughter from the young students when he told, “I am envious of your youth, energy and ambition. At your age I knew that I will never grow old!”

His entire speech revolved around two key words, epiphany and relevance. Dr. Turpin narrated the incidence of two children suffering from pneumonia and as a treating physician how it changed his perception about life. It was the moment in which he decided to spread more smiles and save more lives, and to serve the same cause throughout his life. He encouraged the audience to always listen to their hearts. A well off and comfortable life too cannot be satisfying otherwise. He insightfully added that earning happiness requires taking certain amount of risk.

Further in his speech Dr. Turpin elicited few examples on how the organization has sustained and has seen growth over more than 50 years of its existence now. Reinroducing the word ‘relevance’ here he highlighted that PCI family has always tried to be relevant to the world around it. Like an author he unfurled his emotions saying “My days will be over the moment I stop being relevant.”

Later, while replying to audience questions, Dr Turpin said that earning people’s confidence and trust in an alien environment is challenging, but eventually humanity is a winner. A good documentation in work, accounting and periodic evaluation guided the organization in achieving their goals of humanitarian assistance, he said. Mr. V S Gurumani, country director of PCI India, then addressed the audience starting by introducing himself as not an entrepreneur like Dr Turpin, but an intra-preneur. Further, Mr. Gurumani explained creativity is the essence of their work through imbibed process of thinking feeding to new initiatives in business.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks and appreciation by Dr. L P Singh and Prof. Anupama. They, on behalf of the students and institution expressed gratitude towards Dr. Turpin for managing to come so far to address the gathering. The session left the audience elated and replete with positive energy.