

The Telegraph

Assam to launch prescription audit

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Guwahati, July 5: Assam is set to become the first state in the country to introduce prescription audit to monitor "irrational" prescriptions, preferences for certain lines of treatment and use and misuse of drugs.

The commissioner and secretary of health and family welfare department, J.B. Ekka, while speaking at a seminar on evolving a consumer friendly healthcare system here today, said there were reports and allegations that some doctors

were writing "irrational" prescriptions which could pose health hazards for patients.

Ekka said the health department would introduce the prescription audit system to study or monitor prescription patterns of doctors in public hospitals.

He assured that the matter would be taken up for a detailed discussion with health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma soon.

The Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) International, a reputed NGO and Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Develop-

ment (OKDISCD) organised the seminar where participants discussed a survey report on Collusive Behaviour in Healthcare and Impact on Consumers: Evidence from Assam.

CUTS, which conducted the survey, found that doctors prescribed costlier drugs in those hospitals where medicines had to be purchased from outside.

Doctors were found to prescribe many "irrational" drugs, too.

The survey found a high percentage of incomplete diagnosis. About 90 per cent of prescriptions of the respon-

dents of the survey did not have any evidence of signs and symptoms or preliminary diagnosis of the disease.

The absence of such written record of ailment is a fundamental flaw in medical investigation.

The associate director of CUTS International, Rijit Sengupta, welcomed Ekka's commitment on introduction of the prescription audit and said such a system was prevalent in most of the advanced countries.

He suggested that the private doctors and hospitals should also be brought under such a system.

"In India no state has so far introduced the prescription audit system," he said.

Sengupta said the prescription audit system would help the health department get vital information on the use, misuse and overdose of drugs, irrational drug prescriptions and the preferences for certain lines of treatment.

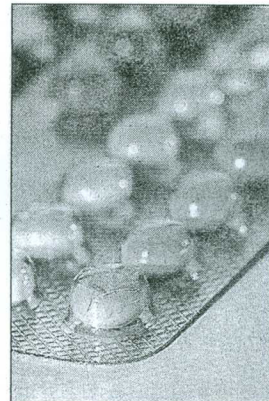
"Providing the right medicine to the right people at the right time is a central priority of healthcare. Prescription audit will minimise overuse and misuse of drugs, plan essential drug selection and estimate the drug need of the community," he said.

Sengupta said the system could be implemented in a simple way by a doctor making out prescriptions in duplicate.

The doctor can give one copy to the patient and another to the competent authority at the time of audit.

Prescription information can be made available on an online system for constant monitoring by the concerning authority.

Director of OKDISCD, Indranee Dutta, said it was high time to bring accountability among various healthcare providers to deliver quality healthcare to patients.



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