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Regulator should take the blame

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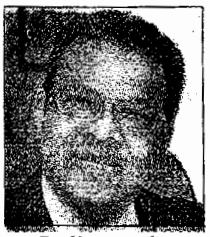
The problem of fake drugs is wide spread affecting both developing and developed nations. The International Dispensary Association (IDA), one of the largest non-profit procurers of medicines, which procures 70 per cent of medicines that they distribute in 130 countries, with its stringent quality checks and procurement mechanism, says India produces drugs of high standard.



Does that mean that no fake drugs are produced in India? It might not be that simple. What it indicates is that that there are enough drugs manufacturers in India capable of producing medicines that meet international standards of production processes and quality. This only goes to show that if there are producers of fake or sub-standard drugs who manage to get their products into the market in India, it is a because of the failure of the regulatory system in India to identify such companies that make them and shut them down.

While most manufacturers might be above-board and well intentioned, a small section seems to be engaging in rogue practices and getting away with it. A national-level scientifically structured large sample collection and testing is urgently required.

Eradicating trade in sub-standard drugs requires better policing and enforcement. If counterfeiters can simply bribe police or prosecutors—as they have traditionally done in India—the problem will only get worse. Thankfully, the new legislation strengthens police powers and establishes an autonomous Central Drugs Authority (CDA). The CDA will coordinate all regulatory activities, including an expanded national drugs quality monitoring programme that will connect medical colleges and hospitals across the country.

(Aggarwal is Executive Director, GRAF Laboratories Private Limited, Ahmedabad)

Regulatory