

406 pharmacies raided, 281 found to be illegal

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A pharmacist, playing doctor, administered some medication to a child suffering from diarrhoea. The child, the daughter of a JNTU watchman, died but no case was registered against the pharmacist because he bought the watchman with ₹20,000.

Several such incidents, most of which go unreported, occur in the city. Unqualified pharmacists continue to play doctor and prescribe drugs to illiterate individuals and do more damage than good.

tip of the iceberg

- No visit of officials in districts for years
- 70% of 52,600 medical stores violate DCA Act
- Licenses renewed to holders of expiry docs

However, the Drugs Control Administration (DCA) raided 406 medical retail shops on Monday in an attempt to curb this malpractice. They found that 281 medical stores that raided were illegal. They were not only unreg-

istered but did not have any expertise in trade and were not providing bills for the medication they were selling.

This seems to be just the tip of the iceberg, since there are 52,600 medical stores in the state and about 70 per cent of these are sure to be violating the DCA Act. In some districts the DCA expects that all drug stores are unregistered.

The AP Pharmacy Council (APPC) alleged that the DCA was issuing licenses to holders of expired pharmacy certificates and were even renewing licenses to hold-

ers of certificates that had expired years ago without any verification of documents, thus violating the DCA Act. A petition to this effect was filed with the SHRC by one P. Varaprasad Rao this year.

Vijay R. Annapareddy, president of the APPC said, "Drug inspectors should visit the premises of the establishments once a year, even though renewal of licenses has to be done every 5 years. But in many districts, no visits have been made by officials for decades, yet their licenses have been renewed with purportedly after verification."

Regulatory.

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