GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1458
ANSWERED ON:05.03.2010
DRUG FOR INFLUENZA A H1N1
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether as per some reports, drug for Influenza A H1N1 was aggressively pushed world over to benefit certain pharmaceutical companies without adequate medical reasons for its widespread prescription;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) the measures taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in the wake of such report;

(d) whether the Government proposes to bring down the price of Influenza H1N1 drug in the country; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE(SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD)

(a) to (c) International and national media reported in January, 2010 a resolution tabled by the Dr. Wolfgang Wodrag, Chairman of the Health Committee in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that in order to promote their patented drug and vaccines against the Swine flu, pharmaceutical companies influenced scientists and official agencies, responsible for public health standards to alarm governments worldwide and make them squander, scarce health resources.

The matter was raised by the Government of India in the Executive Board meeting of World Health Organization held at Geneva in January 2010 and asked WHO to clarify to all member countries the factual position so that the credibility of public health programmes does not get eroded by such allegations.

World Health Organization has thereafter written to all member countries refuting the allegation and confirming that the outbreak of Influenza A H1N1 was indeed a pandemic.

(d)&(e) Oseltamivir does not fall under First Schedule of Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO) 1995. Prices of such formulation are fixed by the manufacturers themselves keeping in view factors such as cost of production, marketing expenses, R&D expenses, trade commission, product innovation, product quality etc. The Govt. takes corrective measure where the public interest is found to be adversely affected. National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) monitors the prices of such formulations. Wherever a price increase beyond 10% per annum is noticed, the manufacturer is asked to bring down the price voluntarily failing which, subject to prescribed conditions, action is initiated under paragraph 10(b) of the DPCO, 1995 for fixing the price of formulations in public interest. This is an ongoing process.