

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:242  
ANSWERED ON:07.02.2014  
ESSENTIAL MEDICINES  
Sivasami Shri C.

**Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:**

- (a) the number of drugs enlisted as essential medicines and the steps taken/proposed by the Government for their adequate availability to meet the health requirements of the general population of the country;
- (b) whether the World Health Organisation (WHO) has laid down any guidelines and requirements in this regard;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken/proposed by the Government to ensure their compliance in the country;
- (d) whether in its report, the WHO has stated that only a low number of medicines from the essential drugs list are prescribed by medical practitioners in the country; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the corrective measures taken/ proposed by the Government to impress upon doctors working in private healthcare facilities to prescribe proper medicines from essential list of medicines as far as possible as per advice of WHO?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABIAZAD)

(a)to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 242 FOR 7TH FEBRUARY, 2014

(a): The National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM), 2011 contains a total of 348 medicines. The NLEM is updated from time to time.

Government has taken following measures for their adequate availability to meet the health requirements of the general population of the country.

(i) The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Policy has brought all the drugs of NLEM under price control. The Department of Pharmaceuticals under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has notified the Drug Price Control Order, 2013 bringing all the NLEM formulations under price control.

(ii) Government provides support to all States/UTs for the availability of these drugs in the Government health facilities free of cost.

(b)&(c): The WHO published its first Model List of Essential Medicines in 1977. The guiding principle is to satisfy the priority health care needs of the population. As per the WHO guidelines, committees of experts are set up to review the latest scientific evidence on the efficacy, safety and cost effectiveness of medicines in order to revise and update the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for both adults and children. The WHO Model List of essential medicines has been revised from time to time. 18th list of WHO model list of Essential Medicines has been published in 2013. WHO also publishes separate model list of essential medicines for children. The 4th List has been published in 2013.

In India, the NLEM was first prepared in 1996, which was revised in 2003. The same has again been revised in 2011 after wide consultations with experts of different therapeutic areas. WHO Model lists of Essential Medicines 2010 were taken into consideration while revising the list in 2011.

(d): No such report has come to the notice of the Government.

(e) Does not arise.