



UNCONTROLLABLE MEDICINE HIKE IN LIBYA

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ABSTRACT

Hundreds of medicines, including life-threatening and chronic diseases medicines, have raised incredibly making them out of the reach of patients in Libya. This happen after pharmaceutical companies increased prices more than 100 per cent during the past few months. Many of these medicines are prescribed broadly for the treatment of common illnesses such as fever, pain, flu, diarrhea, infection, and other diseases. The government is yet to respond to the repeated alarm raised the insistent acute shortage of medicines, some of which are emergency medicines, prevailing across the country for the past few months. This issue has been heading from bad to worse since the ignorance of regulatory authority of Libya to take positive actions is evident.

Keywords: Medicines, Hike, Price, Treatment.

INTRODUCTION

United nation has emphasizes, on their sustainable development goal 3, that there is an immediate need to make sure that each patient has access to good quality treatment at reasonable cost price [1]. Therefore, through diverse interventions, a suitable method to regulate the cost of medicines is to make it affordable to the general population. However, affordable price of medicines in Libya seems to be of low significance to our policy makers. In the recent few months, the price of several important and emergency medicines have raised incredibly in Libya, making them unaffordable to patients with low and middle incomes. In some of these medicines, a price increase of over 200% has been spotted. For instant, the cost of highly prescribed analgesic paracetamol has increased by 325% while that of commonly used cough syrup pseudoephedrine hydrochloride and triprolidine hydrochloride increased by 150%. Moreover, the price of an injection of ceftriaxone 1g increased by 60%. Several medications have recently increased in price over 2-3 months, making them expensive for patient to receive.

OBSERVATION

A packet of widely used cough syrup (Trifed), was available at LYD6.75 in February. The same medicine was available in the drug store in June at price of LYD14.0 (around 200 per cent increase).

Medicine for pain killer such as paracetamol 500 mg, 24-tablet packet sold at LYD3.0 in February and is now available at LYD10.0.

CONCLUSION

The situation of the price hike is getting out of hand for patients in Libya because there is no national health insurance for the majority of patients, and most of them use their pocket money

to buy medicines. However, the main cause of this uncontrollable raise of medicine price is the absence of regulatory authority of Libya. Previously, the emergency medicines as well as medicines for chronic disease were made free of charges for patients. Unfortunately, the new authorities now are not able to control the price of medicines in the market. Moreover, pharmaceutical companies, due to the recent difficult situation in Libya, have raised the prices four to five times over the 2-3 months. Surprisingly, this illegitimate raise in medicine price was not recognized and acted upon by the regulatory authority in Libya.

Regardless of the fact that ministry of health admitted that the medicines of some pharmaceutical companies were overpriced; no actual action was taken to control the price. The issue of medicine price hikes has been, in fact, highlighted by the general national congress in Aug 2016, whereby the congress instructed the regulatory authority to take rigorous action against some pharmaceutical companies who were involved in the increased medicines prices unilaterally. The raise of price was strongly condemned by the Libyan ministry of health, and they declared that no second chance should be given to those companies [2].

However, no further action was taken and patients were left to face the increases of the price by these companies, so they had no other choice unless to pay too expensive prices for medicines those were affordable just few months earlier. In these uncontrollable situations, surly pharmaceutical companies in Libya can sell their products in easy manner without trying to avoid any actions from the regulatory authorities. At the same time, the ignorance to take positive actions from the regulatory authorities is also evident. It is time now for health authorities in Libya to take their responsibility. An adjustment in the relevant schedule appended to the medicine and pricing act is needed that will warrant the government to place rigorous policies on price control, and actions to be taken in case of illegitimate price growing. Instead of making attention to the demands of the pharmaceutical industry, the Libyan government should start listening to the people, who are now faced with unaffordable price of medicines. I declare no compete of interests.

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