

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:303

ANSWERED ON:14.12.2005

AVAILABILITY OF GENERIC MEDICINES FOR AIDS PATIENTS

Patil Shri Balasaheb Vikhe;Singh Shri Rakesh

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

- (a) whether expenses on the treatment of AIDS through Anti-Retro-Viral Therapy has been reduced by twenty times due to availability of generic medicines;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to encourage use/availability of the generic medicines at cheaper rate throughout the country?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 303 FOR 14TH DECEMBER, 2005.

Yes, Sir, the expenses on the treatment of AIDS through Anti Retroviral Therapy has been reduced considerably due to availability of generic medicines.

The cost of branded ARV drugs per patient per year used to be approximately Rs.30,000 per month in the year 1996 and then it was reduced to Rs.18,000 per month in 1998 due to introduction of Nevirapine in the branded triple drugs combination. With the introduction of generic medicines, the market price of these triple drugs combination came down to approximately Rs.1200 per month in the year 2004. However, the Government of India is procuring these triple drugs combination for Rs.550 per month due to bulk purchase centrally for all the ART centers functioning in various states.

Following steps have been taken to encourage availability of ARV drugs at cheaper rates throughout the country:

- a. A working group headed by Secretary(H) with Additional Secretary and Project Director, DGHS, representatives from Pharma industries, FICCI and CII as members was constituted to examine the modalities for cost reduction of ARV drugs by pharma industry, types of custom and excise duty levied on equipment and antiretroviral drugs for consideration of their waiver by the Government and existing facilities for follow-up and monitoring for both public and private sectors. The Working Group meeting was held on 19th November, 2003, and 24th November, 2003. Ministry of Finance and Department of Commerce were requested for waving of excise and custom duties on indigenous/ imported ingredients of raw materials.
- b. GOI have waived the excise duty on ten ARV drugs. These ARV drugs include Stavudine, Zidovudine, Lamivudine, Nevirapine, Efavirenz, Didanosine, Indinavir, Nelfinavir, Ritonavir and Saquinavir.
- c. Custom duty on finished product of following ARV drugs is waived: Ritonavir, Sequanavir, Didanosine, Indinavir. The same is also reduced to only 5.1% on Lamuvudine and Zidovudine. Custom duty on raw material of ARV drugs Indinavir, Didonasine, Ratinovir, Sequinavir is waved and it is also reduced for ARV drugs Zidovudine and Lamovudine.
- d. The CII has supplied two CD4 machines for use under the programme. Free ART services was started from 1st April, 2004, under National AIDS Control Programme through eight(8) selected Goernment hospitals. Today 40 hospitals across the country are providing free ART services. It is also planned to provide free ARV treatment to 1.8 lakh patients till end of year 2010. The EFC proposal has already been approved. In this regard, bulk procurement of ARV drugs is being done through competitive bidding which also helps in reducing the cost.
- e. The anti AIDS Drugs also include treatment given for Prevention of Parent to Child Transmission (PPTCT) of HIV infection and for post exposure prophylaxis. Drugs for PPTCT have been supplied to all the States/UTs for free distribution to mother and new born child. Currently, 377 centers are providing PPTCT services across the country. Funds are provided to all the State AIDS Control Societies (SACS) for purchase of antiretroviral drugs for use in post exposure prophylaxis and the same is purchased by the states locally and supplied to the government hospitals for treatment of the patients as per need.