



## PHARMACEUTICALS EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL

(Set up by Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India)

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### **Panel anguished over unethical practices of pharma cos to evade price control**

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**Ramesh Shankar, Mumbai**

Direct link to the News/Story:-

<http://www.pharmabiz.com/article/detnews.asp?articleid=57223&sectionid=>

The Parliamentary standing committee on Health and Family Welfare led by Rajya Sabha MP Amar Singh has expressed unhappiness over the unethical and corrupt practices that had crept into the pharma business in which many companies while retaining the popular brand names of their price controlled products were changing the ingredients to evade ceiling prices.

In its 45th report presented to the Rajya Sabha on August 4, 2010, the committee cited the examples like Cetrizet-D of Sun Pharmaceuticals (price controlled pseudoephedrine replaced with phenylephrine), Normet of Emcure (price controlled norfloxacin replaced with ofloxacin) and Brakke suspension of Franco-Indian (price controlled ciprofloxacin replaced with ofloxacin).

The panel noted that in other cases, manufacturers just added another agent of hardly any clinical rationale to exorbitantly hike the prices. Examples included Norflox of Cipla (lactobacillus added to price controlled norfloxacin) and Doxy-1 of USV (lactic acid bacillus added to price controlled doxycycline).

Concerned over the lack of any inter-Ministerial mechanism for checking such corrupt practices, the panel took up the matter with the Department of Health and Family Welfare and Department of Pharmaceuticals in February, 2010. Subsequently a High Powered Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee under the chairmanship of secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals was constituted. Other members of the committee included NPPA chairman, DCGI, Secretary (Health & Family Welfare), Secretary (MSME) and Joint Secretary (Pharma) in charge of NPPA.

Meanwhile, the Department of Pharmaceuticals has informed the panel that after deliberation on the matter, the Inter- Ministerial Coordination Committee may recommend a framework for ensuring availability of quality medicines at affordable prices to the government within a period of one year.