Science & Technology · GS - III

Discuss the challenges associated with drug quality control and supply-chain management in India's public healthcare system. Suggest measures to prevent the administration of expired or substandard medicines.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 30/10/2026	GS - III	Science & Technology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Drug safety; public health accountability; Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940; CDSCO; state drug regulators; hospital procurement; inventory management; pharmacovigilance; quality assurance

Model Answer

Introduction

The reported possibility of expired medicines being administered to Nipah patients in Kerala highlights the importance of drug quality control and effective supply-chain management in public healthcare institutions.

Key Challenges

- **Weak inventory management:** Inadequate tracking of expiry dates can allow expired medicines to remain in hospital stocks.
- **Procurement gaps:** Deficiencies in vendor verification, storage and distribution may compromise medicine quality.
- **Regulatory coordination:** Effective enforcement requires coordination between CDSCO and state drug-control authorities.

- **Patient safety:** Expired or substandard medicines may compromise treatment outcomes and public confidence.

Measures Required

1. Introduce digital inventory systems with automated expiry alerts and batch tracking.
2. Conduct regular stock audits and ensure the first-expiry-first-out (FEFO) principle.
3. Strengthen quality testing, supplier verification and hospital-level accountability.
4. Establish clear reporting mechanisms for medication errors and adverse drug events.
5. Ensure time-bound investigations and appropriate action against negligence.

Conclusion

Drug safety is an essential component of public health security. Transparent procurement, robust monitoring and institutional accountability can prevent avoidable medication-related risks.

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