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November Sees Significant Surge in Respiratory Drug Sales Amid Deteriorating AQI: Pharmarack

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Indicates a rising public awareness and responsiveness to health concerns



As the air quality across multiple regions in the country continues to decline, November's sales data reveals a striking increase in respiratory medication consumption. Key insights from an Indian Pharma performance indicate that worsening Air Quality Index (AQI) scores have driven up demand for antihistamines and other respiratory treatments, marking a notable shift in the pharmaceutical landscape according to Sheetal Sapale — Vice President (Commercial) at Pharmarack Technologies.

In a presentation she noted that November has historically been a peak month for respiratory drug sales, with an upward trend expected due to seasonal changes. However, this year’s data, underscores an alarming correlation between increasing AQI scores and pharmaceutical sales, particularly in northern and urban areas. For instance, sales of antihistamine products, which experienced growth rates of 8 per cent and 5 per cent in November 2023 and 2024 respectively, skyrocketed to nearly double digits at 9 per cent in November 2025. This surge is closely tied to the AQI levels, as public health concerns over air pollution escalate.

During the presentation, Sheetal emphasized a focused analysis on three major respiratory categories: antihistamines, cough and cold medications, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) treatments. Collectively, these segments account for approximately 90 per cent of the respiratory market. The data reveals that respiratory medication consumption typically peaks from June to December, aligning with seasonal health trends exacerbated by environmental factors.

While the increase in medication sales indicates a rising public awareness and responsiveness to health concerns, it also raises questions about the long-term implications of deteriorating air quality. As the AQI scores climb into ‘poor’ and ‘extremely poor’ categories, affecting millions, there is a pressing need for systemic changes in environmental policy and public health initiatives.

Sheetal further pointed out that worsening AQI levels are now clearly reflected in increased consumption across core respiratory therapy categories, signalling a strong environment-linked disease burden. Multiple regions are recording double-digit month-on-month growth in November, indicating that winter triggered ailments are no longer a seasonal fluctuation but air pollution in winter months makes it an escalating public health trigger.