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Regulatory oversight on supply chain of weight loss drugs (GLP-1)

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The Drugs Controller of India (DCGI) has intensified its regulatory oversight against unauthorised sale and promotion of the drug to ensure ethical pharmacological procedures in the supply chain of the weight loss drug (GLP-1).

The introduction of several novel generic variants of GLP-1 based weight loss drugs in the Indian market has raised concerns about their on-demand availability through retail pharmacies, online platforms, wholesalers and health clinics. The use of these medications without proper medical supervision can lead to serious side effects and associated health risks.

Taking cognizance of the situation, the Drugs Controller General of India in collaboration with the State Regulators has initiated action to curb and curb potential malpractices in the drug supply chain and prevent unauthorized sale and use.

Recently, a comprehensive advisory was issued to all manufacturers, prohibiting clearly misleading advertisements and any form of indirect promotion that could mislead consumers or encourage off-label use.

At present, enforcement activities have been significantly enhanced. Audits and inspections were carried out in 49 entities including online pharmacy warehouses, pharmaceutical wholesalers, retailers, health and weight loss clinics. These inspections were conducted in multiple areas across the country and aimed to identify violations related to unauthorised sales, improper prescription methods, and deceptive marketing. In addition, notices have also been sent to the delinquent entities.

The regulator emphasises that the safety of patients is paramount. Misuse of weight loss medications without medical supervision can lead to serious health problems. Citizens are advised to use such medicines only under the guidance of qualified medical practitioners.