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Terror angle to fake drugs: Experts

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"The counterfeiting of drugs is not a simple issue of producing fake drugs but can have other dimensions as well. It is being said that the terrorists and anti-social elements can weaken the economy by using this modus operandi," stated Dr Praful Naik, chief scientific officer (CSO), Bilcare Research, who spoke at the open house consultation organized recently by the Partnership for Safe Medicine (PSM) at New Delhi.

This revelation makes the issue far more serious and many experts feel that there must be a mechanism to put timely checks on the illegal activities. Moreover, enacting strict laws is also an option that is being seriously considered by the authorities.

"Technology measures have to be taken. A review is needed for the existing techniques. Accountability on part of manufacturers is a very important part of this cycle," mentioned Dr Naik, who is alsoÂ a member of the national working group constituted by the principal scientific adviser to the government of India for scientific and technological measures to counter spurious and sub-standard drugs and diagnostic centres.

At the same time confusion prevails among various stake holders in distinguishing the spurious or substandard drugs and fake drugs. According to Mr Dilip G Shah, secretary general, Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance, "Substandard drugs are not any illegal activity and it has to be considered as a technical failure. In few cases, small units are not always able to provide technically qualified employees, resulting in some issues with the final product that is not entirely fake. The true intention may not to be to produce such drugs, but could have happened due to various lacking points, such as infrastructure or the other basic issues."

"However, fake drugs are a huge risk and have to be tracked and traced to ensure that these don't get mixed up with our supply chain and healthcare." added Mr Shah.