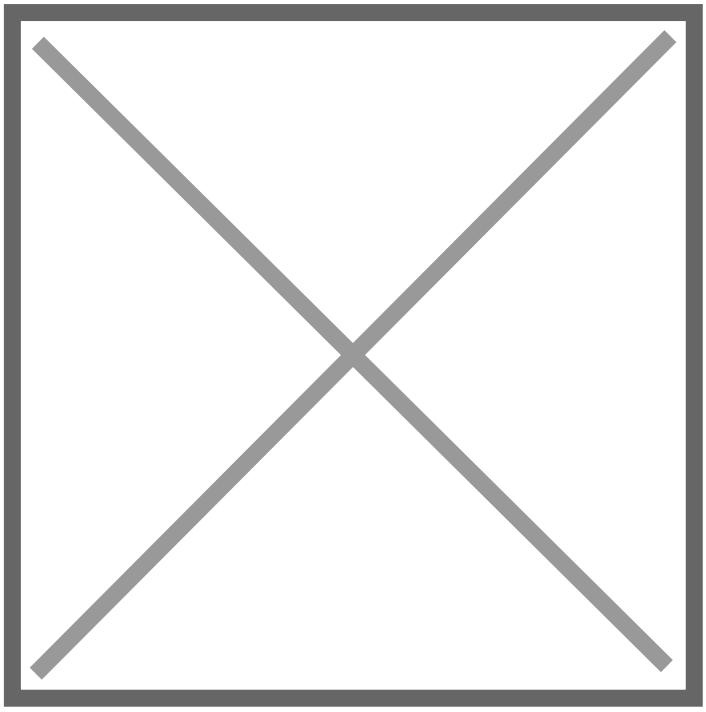
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# Diabetic patients taking pioglitazone need not panic about any risks, say city Doctors

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**Diabetic patients taking pioglitazone need not panic about any risks, say city Doctors**



Concerned with frequent diabetic patient queries after the ban on pioglitazone announced last week, leading physicians and diabetes experts from the city came together to allay patient concerns. Over 30 lakh patients across India were using pioglitazone medication. The Doctors sought to allay patient fears about pioglitazone usage, as the drug is currently used in all countries including USA, UK, Japan, etc. except France where it was gradually phased out. The meet was addressed by renowned Doctors including Dr. Vijay Panikar, Dr. Siddharth Shah and Dr. Rajiv Kovil. The Doctors expressed confidence that the authrorities will review pioglitazone ban once more clinical data is submitted to them. Affordability for the masses and lack of absolute susbstitute with similar efficacy are two favourable considerations for the drug.

Pioglitazone is the 2nd/ 3rd line of treatment for Type 2 diabetes and is one of the commonly prescribed medicines for the treatment. With the ban on the drug, concerned patients are increasingly reaching out to their doctors to seek treatment advice.

Dr Siddharth Shah initiated the conversation and mentioned that the drug is a beautiful drug. He said, "There are more than 60 million diabetics in India, with more than 95% being type II diabetes patients. For such patients, insulin resistance is a major complication. Lifestyle modification can help only 20% of these patients; others need medication. Pioglitazone allows the internal insulin to work in the body and has its own capacity to reduce glucose. Every drug has side effects; doctors are aware of the patient history and risk factors and are then prescribing the drug. The low cost of the drug is a huge factor to consider too."

While mentioning the reason why the drug is popular Dr Vijay Panikar asserts, "Indians/Asians are made up of different phenotypes and genotypes. We are more inclined to have type II diabetes. Considering all this, pioglitazone is the only drug that can act on the insulin resistance problem of Indians. Literature has an equal share of reports mentioning the harmful and beneficial effects of pioglitazone, and doctors are astutely prescribing the drug after understanding the benefits and risks involved. Pioglitazone is a good molecule when used rationally. The government should reconsider the decision for this molecule and add more contraindications for the use of this drug. Cost of alternatives available would be a major factor for several hospitals and society."

While talking about the safety and efficacy issues of the drug, Dr Kovil stressed on the judicious prescribing of the drug. He mentioned that, "Considering the patient profile before prescribing this drug is very important. Regulatory authorities such as EMEA and US FDA too have approved the drug, while mentioning that patients with risk/history of bladder cancer should not be taking this drug. Similarly, it should be noted that pioglitazone has several other benefits such as reducing cholesterol levels and acting as an inflammatory marker. All factors should be considered and the drug should be prescribed wisely."