

## WHO launches global campaign for use of smart syringes

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Director general of the World Health Organization (WHO), Ms Margaret Chan flagged off the "Global Campaign for Safe Injection Practice." It is the biggest worldwide safe health initiative on the use of a new injection safety policy and global campaign advocating the use of auto-disable (AD) syringes.

Dangerous injection practices led to the accidental infection worldwide of 1.7 million people with hepatitis B, 315,000 with hepatitis C and as many as 33,800 with HIV in 2010, according to a 2014 WHO-sponsored study.

WHO urged the countries to switch to the exclusive use of the Auto-Disable "smart" syringes, that can only be used once in order to better battle deadly diseases spread by needle sharing in an endeavor to eliminate millions of avoidable deaths and infections due to use of reusable syringes and unsafe injection practices.

"It is a very proud moment for India that WHO has chosen India as the focus country to tackle the pervasive issue of unsafe injection practices and also because the global leader and innovator in AD syringes happens to be an Indian company, Hindustan Syringes and Medical Device Ltd (HMD) shall work hand in glove with WHO's global directive for use of Auto Disposable syringes in public healthcare systems," said Mr Rajiv Nath, forum coordinator AIMED and Joint MD, HMD.

It may be noted that HMD happens to be the world's largest manufacturer of AD syringes and is also a coalition partner of SIGN (Safe Injection Global Network) and a strategic partner of GAVI - the global vaccine alliance for public-private health partnership committed to increasing access to immunization in developing countries.

"Adoption of safety-engineered syringes is absolutely critical to protecting people worldwide from becoming infected with HIV, hepatitis and other diseases. This should be an urgent priority for all countries," said Dr Gottfried Hirnschall, director of the WHO HIV/AIDS Department.

"I do very sincerely hope that Government of India ,in light of the WHO initiative will now follow its own directives on the use of AD syringes in public healthcare system and in fact make it mandatory for use of AD in all public healthcare system," said Mr Nath.