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Centre amended the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 to allow sale of homeopathic drugs OTC

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On the recommendation of the Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB), the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has amended the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945. The DTAB had urged the government to strictly regulate sale of homeopathic medicines and take efforts to increase the availability of these drugs to needy patients.

According to the amended rules, the allopathic chemist shops are allowed to sell only over the counter (OTC) homeopathic products.

Now, homeopathic medicines can be purchased over the counter (OTC) from the common chemist shop selling allopathic drugs.

Under the existing laws, the sale of homeopathy and allopathic drugs from the same shop was not allowed.

The new rules restrict loose sale of homeopathic medicines and mandates shops to sell only full bottle-sealed medications or dilutions. However, consultation of patients is not allowed from any of these pharmacies. Doctors, who dispense homeopathic drugs from their clinics, can continue to do so.

The amendment has also brought in stipulated qualifications for those who dispense homeopathic drugs. Now, homeopathic pharmacists should have a diploma in pharmacy or a diploma in homeopathy and surgery or diploma in homeopathic pharmacy or be a science graduate with minimum one year experience of dealing in homeopathic drugs.

Dr M Arulvanan, secretary general of the Indian Homeopathic Medical Association (IHMA) said, “The amendments did not restrict homeopathic doctors from practising in their premises from dispensing medicines to their own patients. This amendment restricts only those doctors practicing in homeopathy pharmacy premises from selling medicines.”