ENSURING THE POPULATION'S ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE AND HIGH-QUALITY MEDICINES: CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

Igamnazarova M.A.[1]
Azlyarova G.U.[2]
[1]Tashkent Pharmaceutical Institute, 5th-year student,
[2]Assistant, Department of Organization of Pharmaceutical Affairs, Tashkent Pharmaceutical Institute. Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan
E-mail: razabovaliser3@gmail.com
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Relevance: the sustainable development of the pharmaceutical sector plays a crucial role in ensuring public health. In Uzbekistan, the pharmaceutical market remains highly dependent on imports, faces the issue of counterfeit and low-quality medicines, underdeveloped local production, and weak quality control systems. Therefore, providing the population with affordable and high-quality medicines remains a matter of both scientific and practical importance.

Purpose of the study: the purpose of this study is to analyze the measures being taken to ensure the population's access to affordable and high-quality medicines, to restrict the production of counterfeit drugs, to support local manufacturers, and to reduce dependence on imported pharmaceutical products.

Materials and methods: the study utilized official data from the Center for Pharmaceutical Product Safety and decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Results: according to the Presidential Decree UP-20 (January 23, 2024), manufacturers and distributors of pharmaceuticals and medical products were made directly responsible for the quality, safety, and efficacy of their goods. Specific state control regulations were introduced, and regional structures were reorganized under the newly established Good Practices Center system. A 'Roadmap for 2024–2025' was approved to accelerate new projects and allocate funding for their implementation. Additionally, the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution PP-14 (January 10, 2024) defined measures to attract investments, introduce international standards such as GMP, and expand production volumes. After the Marion Biotech case, stricter quality and safety measures were adopted, responsible officials were penalized, and compensation mechanisms were introduced – strengthening control and reducing low-quality imports. In the first quarter of 2025, the Center for Certification of Medical Products issued 307 conformity certificates for 770 series comprising 119,651,012 conditional packages of medicines, medical devices, and equipment. However, 49 series (408,521 packages) were deemed non-compliant with regulatory requirements. Cases of illegal drug production were identified in several regions: in Tashkent's Mirzo Ulug'bek district, about 180 kg of powdered raw materials and nearly 3,000 packages of counterfeit tablets and capsules were discovered; in Kashkadarya, unlicensed home-based drug manufacturing was exposed; and in Gulistan, authorities confiscated 10,481 expired medical products worth 435.9 million UZS stored for resale.

Conclusions: to strengthen domestic pharmaceutical production, it is necessary to: prioritize GMP-certified local companies in state procurement and extend long-term contracts; simplify registration and authorization procedures, especially for local analogues; provide preferential loans, grants, and investment subsidies; establish free economic zones and pharma parks; expand bioequivalence and laboratory infrastructure (GLP, ISO/IEC 17025) to facilitate faster, cheaper clinical trials for generics; create a fast-track pathway for local products in the State Register and

ensure transparent reference pricing mechanisms; support export-oriented producers through grants for SRA-compliant documentation.