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Americans need Generic Drugs. But can they trust them?!

The American people depend on medicine to help them for various reasons. It may be due to a disease, medical emergency, or maintenance. The bioequivalence of a brand and generic medicine should both equally meet the standards of purity, quality, and safety. Many Americans cannot afford a brand name medication mostly due to their expensive cost. The generic brands cost less, making it more affordable for the American society, and help them with their medical concerns. The United States depends on foreign countries to fabricate and provide generic drugs to the American people. The American people believe that the generic drugs provided are safe to use and can be trusted. The question that arises is are these companies from foreign countries following the regulations to fabricate safe generic drugs to Americans?

According to the article from the New York Times, “Americans need Generic Drugs. But can they trust them?!” written by Katherine Eban, it mentions about investigations being done in a plant named Aurangabad, which is run by the Indian company Wockhardt. According to her research, the plant fabricated contaminated generic drugs. A vial insulin and an injectable cardiac medication were contaminated with metallic fragments from the sterilization machine. After six months of research, the FDA had to ban import of drugs from this plant, with a potential loss of $100 million dollars. The company did not provide any comments.

The article “Quality of Generic Drugs Manufactured Overseas Comes Into Question”, by the American Society of Hematology (ASH) Clinical News, it mentions about the research done by Katherine Eban. The article states,” The FDA officials often notify global manufacturers months in advance of their visits in order to minimize diplomatic tensions. This gives noncompliant companies time to clean plants, destroy contaminated drugs, and shred or falsify documents before inspection”. In other words, they commit fraudulent acts by demonstrating they are following appropriate regulations when reality is they are not, making it difficult to prove that they are providing contaminated medication to the United States.

The contamination of the generic medicine is not the only reason for it to be considered untrustworthy. At times, it has to do if they have followed the appropriate measures to see if it provides the same quality as a brand name medicine. The article, “Do generic drugs compromise on quality?” written by the Harvard Health Publishing, Dr. Choudhry said, “For example, the manufacturer of a generic blood pressure medicine wouldn’t need to prove that its drug also lowers blood pressure”. There are companies that use the chemical composition of the brand name and make a close assimilation for the generic. The astonishing part is they do not have to demonstrate that the generic is therapeutically equivalent to the brand name. This means that they do not test the generic medication to assure that they both function equally before sending it to the market.

The ethical issue is that the pharmaceutical companies/plants overseas do not follow the proper measures to fabricate and deliver safe generic medications to the United States. The fabrication of contaminated medications and fraudulent documents is a dangerous matter. The FDA should put more emphasis into investigating these plants without giving any notifications. This will give them the opportunity to evaluate how these plants are functioning. The priority is the people not the money. Pharmaceutical companies do not want to lose millions of dollars, but people’s lives matter more, and when a plant is functioning incorrectly, it should be shut down.

First, as a future aspiring dental hygienist, I would spread the word and do my best educating the public of the seriousness of generic medications being contaminated and/or not properly tested by companies, and the dangers it can give to our friends and families. I would start a petition because it is important to demonstrate that the community and I both are very concerned, and this is a situation that should be seriously addressed. Many people depend on generic medications due to lower cost, and we want to make sure that what we are consuming is safe and effective. I will write a letter to the senator to help the community and I take this situation to the members of Congress. If everyone’s voice is heard, companies will be held accountable for their actions, and will have to provide safer generic drugs.

References:

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