

Delhi DCA conducts raids on wholesaler's premises and seize counterfeit versions of Vertin tab worth Rs. 5 lakhs

Subsequent to the major raid and seizure of counterfeit drugs conducted by the Delhi drug control department in the national capital territory (NCT) two weeks ago, the department sleuths have now acted on a tip off by Maharashtra FDA about large stocks of spurious and counterfeit medicines in the godown of a wholesale dealer in Delhi.

Accordingly, a regulators' team led by the deputy drug controller and SLA of Delhi, Dr KR Chawla, raided the premises of a wholesale dealer, Neelkanth Pharma Pvt Ltd, at Bhagirath Place in the national capital and seized large quantities of suspected counterfeit version of Vertin tablets (betahistine hydrochloride I.P.) of 16 mg and 8 mg.

The seized products worth Rs 5 lakhs, and they were labelled as manufactured by Abbott India Ltd.

The proprietor of the wholesale business shop was a person named Bharat Chitkara. He was found stocking large quantities of betahistine tablets, Vertin 16 mg and 8 mg, in his depot. After seizing the stocks of products, the department initiated prosecution against him and issued orders for investigation, said Dr. RA Chawla, drug controller-in-charge in Delhi.

Briefing Pharmabiz about the incident, Dr Chawla said his team seized 15,000 tablets of Vertin 16 mg and 6,000 tablets of Vertin 8 mg. He said, "Upon scanning the QR code on the packaging, it was discovered that the codes were not unique and displayed the same serial number on all the strips of the suspected drug instead of displaying different serial numbers on all strips. Further, when the UV light was focused on the white portion of the strips, the company name 'Abbott' was not visible, which appears in the genuine product, adding to the suspicion that it was spurious and counterfeit products".

Vertin tablet is indicated to treat symptoms such as ringing in the ears (tinnitus), dizziness, vertigo, loss of balance and hearing loss associated with Meniere's disease. Meniere's disease is a chronic inner ear disorder that primarily affects balance and hearing. The drug works by increasing the blood flow to the brain and by lowering the extra pressure build up in the inner ear.

The regulators collected samples of the suspected counterfeit drugs, and the remaining stock was taken under custody under Section 22(1)(c) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. The proprietor, Bharat Chitkara, confirmed the facts through one voluntary statement and has been directed to disclose the source of the suspected counterfeit medicine. Custody permission was taken from the magistrate to permit the said drugs in the custody of the DCA, said Dr. Chawla.

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