

THE PROBLEM OF THE MEDICINE PRICING IN LEBANON

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Lebanon is a country with relatively uncontrolled drug price regulations. High drug cost, difficult economic situations and low income pushed the patients to find other alternatives to the elevated medicine prices. Government and Health care associations must solve such problems and provide affordable therapeutic solutions to overcome the rising cost of health care and drugs. Lebanon is also known for its very limited drug manufacturing and most drugs are imported mainly from European countries, USA and some Arab Countries. Besides, imported drugs prices are very high in terms of international pricing and the elevated prices are therefor due to shipment fees and taxes imposed by the government on the imported drugs.

Another misconception, is that patients believe that high cost drugs are more effective and direct their drug purchase to the expensive drug. Those who can't afford elevated costs shift to "*Fraud Drugs*" for the reason that it's cheaper and affordable. By comparing the genuine drug's price in Lebanon with the Fraud drug's price, a patient can recognize that the same drug will cost him double, triple and sometimes 5 times the price of the same drug in his home country. Therefore, the patient with low or middle income decides to cut costs and to get the cheapest choice. "*Fraud Drugs*" are usually outsourced from neighboring countries.

As a result of such actions, another problem rise in the neighboring countries where the drug demands exceeds the drug availability. Getting medicines from neighboring countries do not solve the problem of "The Drug Accessibility". A huge number of patients do not have connections with neighboring countries and stay obliged to either buy high cost available drugs in Lebanon, remain with incomplete treatment or sometimes with absence of treatment.

To resolve all those issues, several solutions must be found to provide Good HealthCare Quality for "Drug Consumers" and reasonable profit to "Drug Manufacturers".

Ethically, Manufacturer's profit should never come first. It's the patient's health that should be a priority.

In Developed countries around the world, big manufacturers are asked to produce effective medicine along with an optimum price for the patient.

In such countries, Government support the manufacturer by decreasing the tax or by reducing the import fees of the drug's raw material.

Nowadays, Drug Manufacturer's around the world are spending enormous amount of money and time to produce, test and release a new drug. Once the drug is licensed, ready to be launched and to be sold to end users, Manufacturers sell this drug with high cost and in bulk quantities to wholesalers, intermediaries and pharmacists and exert on them push force to sell the product in a short period of time. All of this is in the aim of covering their loss and expenses during the years of research and testing.

To help the manufacturer and cease him from increasing the cost of the licensed drug, the government should facilitate and fasten the release of the drug license and patents and reduce all the expenses of the drug between the two different phases of development and licensing.

On the other hand, government also should supports patients by decreasing the price of the drug in private pharmacies, provides a wide majority of medicines in the governmental hospitals with low prices and it also must facilitate the paper work needed from patients to get their medicines from governmental hospitals and doctors.

Moreover, "WHO" (World Health Organization) and several different associations are often releasing and publishing various recommendations to follow. Such recommendations are documented, available and easy to apply. These recommendation help to decrease the cost of the drug leading to decrease its public price.