

1. [Standing up to patent bullying](#) -

The Hindu  
The Modi government must stop engaging U.S. bureaucrats as patent consultants and instead showcase the Indian patent statute as an exemplar for a balanced regime

Earlier this month, the media reported that India "privately" assured the United States that it will not issue any more compulsory licenses. This report was reminiscent of a theory propounded by psychologist Lenore E. Walker in 1979 on abusive patterns in relationships.

Walker studied abuse in family situations and outlined an important model detailing four stages of abuse. Had the U.S. and India been human beings, this would have been a classic case of

household abuse. The first stage documented by Dr. Walker is tension-building where there is

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strain in the relationship and one partner tries to dominate the situation. Indeed, the U.S. has successfully dominated the discussions simply by citing India every single year, most often unfairly, to take control of the situation. For years, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) has pounded India using the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), an administrative body, as its chosen mechanism to repeatedly criticise India and unfairly escalate issues on a yearly basis.

2. [344 drugs recommended for banning after very scientific process: Panel head Dr Kokate](#) – The Times of India

Recently, union health ministry banned 344 fixed drugs combinations (FDC) following the recommendations of expert committee headed by senior personality Dr C K Kokate, former president of Pharmacy Council of India, presently serving as vice-chancellor of Belagavi based KLE University for over past 10 years. He exclusively spoke to the Times of India on the recommendation made to ban 344 FDCs.

3. [Over 20 pharma firms manage to get a stay on govt's recent drug ban](#) – The Times of India

Public health activists and doctors' associations have come out strongly in support of the government's bid to ban irrational fixed dose combinations in the drug market. In the meantime, more than 20 pharma companies have managed to get a stay on the government ban.

"The Indian judiciary should be cautious in interim injunctions as it could undo years of technical work that a number of expert committees did, despite the pressure from the industry pressure of reports," said Leena Menghaney, a lawyer working on access to medicines and public health. She added that the legal resolution of the injunction on the ban should be "based on technical evidence, which is now well highlighted in medical journal articles and expert committee reports and not on the objections of the pharmaceutical industry".

4. [FDC ban a bitter pill for diabetics](#) - The Times of India

The sudden ban on a number of combination drugs meant for diabetes has created a flutter among patients who have been taking these pills for years. Patients are anxious and confused because the government now perceives these drugs 'irrational and unsafe'.

Allying these fears, doctors have advised patients to make sure they continue to take appropriate dosages of all their medications. The only change is that instead of taking the fixed dose combinations (FDCs), which are a combination of two or more active drugs in a single dose, they would now have to take separate pills.

5. [Experts divided over govt decision](#) – The Times of India

Experts are divided over the pros and cons of fixed dose combination (FDC) meant for diabetes patients. While some favour the Union government's decision to ban them, others say that issuing a blanket ban would mean depriving patients of this useful class of drug.

"In my opinion, withdrawing all the available combination pills is not correct. Some are good and useful. However, I do agree that there are a few FDCs in the market that are not rational," said diabetologist Shailaja Kale.

6. [Health experts, docs: Centre's move good for patient safety](#) – The Times of India

Even as more companies on Wednesday challenged the ban on combination drugs in the Delhi high court, public health experts and doctors have welcomed the government notification, saying withdrawal of "irrational" and "harmful" medicines from the market is good for patient safety and health.

The judiciary should be cautious in granting injunctions, and scrutinise the issue with the help of clinical data before taking a decision, experts say, adding it should not be solely looked at in terms of revenue loss to companies, but also take into account public health criteria.

7. [FDC drugs ban hits 400 Gujarat firms, 2,000 brands](#) – The Times of India  
The Centre's decision to ban 344 fixed dose combination (FDC) drugs has impacted more than 400 small and big pharmaceutical companies in Gujarat. The ban covers more than 2,000 brands manufactured by these firms. H G Koshia, commissioner, Food and Drug Control Administration, Gujarat, said they had already started the process of identifying companies and their product licenses which fall under the purview of this ban. "We have zeroed in on more than 400 companies and over 2,000 products marketed under different brand names," said Koshia. Although 344 combination drugs have been banned, the number of brands or products is higher because many companies own and market more than one combination of these FDC drugs.

8. [Chemists write to PM Modi, seek intervention on ban of 350 drugs](#) – Hindustan Times  
Chemists have now sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention on the ban of 350 fixed-dose combination (FDC) drugs.

FDC medicines combine two or more drugs in a single pill. While the idea is to benefit the patient in terms of faster recovery, many experts feel some therapeutic groups, when clubbed together, might lead to drug resistance. In India, many pharma companies obtain licence from a state to make FDCs, and sell them without the consent of the Central government.

9. [Simply Put: Why you can no longer buy some popular medicines](#) – Indian Express  
The Health Ministry in a gazette notification issued on March 12 banned 344 fixed dose drug combinations, many of them popular brands of over-the-counter anti-pyretic (used to prevent or reduce fever) and anti-inflammatory drugs that have been household names for several years now. Health experts have pointed to their many side-effects — some of them fatal — and the lack of therapeutic justification for their sale. Eventually, it was the view of an expert committee formed expressly for the purpose of examining these drugs that the government used to accede to the longstanding demand for a ban.

10. [Ban on sale of 344 drugs: Delhi HC to resume hearing pleas against Centre's order](#) – Indian Express  
The Delhi High Court is likely to resume Monday the hearing on pleas by over 30 pharma majors, including Pfizer, Glenmark, Procter and Gamble (P&G) and Cipla, challenging the government's decision to ban sale of some of their fixed dose combination medicines.

Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw, who has stayed operation of the government's notification till March 21 and directed the Centre not to take coercive steps against these companies, is expected to resume hearing the matters tomorrow.

Also appeared in [The Economic Times](#)

11. [Doctors welcome ban on combination drugs](#) – The Hindu  
The ban on fixed-dose combination (FDC) drugs by the Centre has resulted in the recall of hundreds of medicines, which medical stores have begun returning to wholesalers. While ordinary citizens may not have access to some commonly bought over-the-counter drugs, doctors in the city feel that the move will help in the long run.

An FDC is a drug which contains two or more components of fixed proportion. While the banned ones will no longer be available to patients, doctors say that anyone requiring a combination of two or medicines can simply be given doses separately. "Combinations are not found in most anti-diabetic or life-saving drugs. In fact, with an FDC, the dosage of the constituents are pre-decided, and in higher doses," pointed out Dr. L. Narendranath, former director, NIMS.

12. [India coughs up a cold call: no more sweet nothings](#) – The Hindu  
The decision to ban 300-odd fixed-dose combination drugs brings down the curtain on Indians' obsession for self-medication through codeine-based cough syrups

The fall from grace for codeine — once the world's most lauded cough medicine — had begun nearly half a century ago before it was formally tombstoned by India earlier this week. Corex, a cough syrup whose most important element is codeine and one of pharma major Pfizer's most profitable drugs in India, was banned along with 300-odd so-called fixed-dose combination (FDC) drugs on March 14.

13. [Kerala HC gives chemists 2 more weeks to return 344 banned drugs](#) – The Economic Times  
The Kerala High Court has granted chemists and druggists in the state more time to return the brands banned by a recent government order on 344 fixed dose combination (FDC) drugs. FDCs are a mix of two or more drug ingredients combined into one dose.

Industry executives said chemist in other states are following suit. For instance, the Tamil Nadu Chemist and Druggist Association (TNCDA) is set to file a petition in a few days, they said.

14. [Delhi HC stays ban on drugs of Wockhardt, Glaxo and Griffon](#) – The Economic Times  
Delhi High Court today stayed the the ban on some fixed dose combination (FDC) drugs of Glaxo SmithKline, WockhardtBSE and Laboratories Griffon but said action against their sale could be taken in the absence of valid sale and marketing licence.

The drugs which were subject matter of today's plea are Aceproxyvon, Viscodyne and Viscodyne-D of Wockhardt, Crocin Cold and Flu Max of Glaxo and Grilinctus syrup of Griffon.

15. [Over 20 pharma firms manage to get a stay on govt's recent drug ban](#) - The Economic Times  
Public health activists and doctors' associations have come out strongly in support of the government's bid to ban irrational fixed dose combinations in the drug market. In the meantime, more than 20 pharma companies have managed to get a stay on the government ban.

"The Indian judiciary should be cautious in interim injunctions as it could undo years of technical work that a number of expert committees did, despite the pressure from the industry pressure of reports," said Leena Menghaney, a lawyer working on access to medicines and public health. She added that the legal resolution of the injunction on the ban should be "based on technical evidence, which is now well highlighted in medical journal articles and expert committee reports and not on the objections of the pharmaceutical industry".

16. [HC to hear pharma pleas against ban](#) – Business Standard  
The Delhi High Court is likely to resume tomorrow the hearing on pleas by over 30 pharma majors, including Pfizer, Glenmark, Procter and Gamble (P&G) and Cipla, challenging the government's decision to ban sale of some of their fixed dose combination medicines.

Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw, who has stayed operation of the government's notification till March 21 and directed the Centre not to take coercive steps against these companies, is expected to resume hearing the matters tomorrow.

17. [Bitter pill served to 1,670 drug brands](#) – Business Standard  
The government has banned as many as 1,670 drug brands, estimated total annual sales of Rs 3,728 crore, an analysis by IMS Health shows. These brands are part of the 344 fixed drug combinations which were banned by the government last week, triggering protests and legal action by pharma industry.

The companies likely to be most affected are Pfizer, Abbott and Macleods Pharma. While only six brands by Pfizer have been banned, their sales were as much as Rs 424 crore between February 2015 and February 2016. Abbott saw 36 of its brands banned which had annual sales of Rs 400 crore in the same period. Similarly, 30 brands by Macleods Pharma, with annual sales of Rs 400 crore, have been banned.

18. [Drug ban may erode 12% of pharma market turnover](#) – Business Standard

The government's recent ban on 344 fixed dose combinations (FDCs) and short-listing around 600 more FDCs to be banned, coupled with the double impact of linking drug prices to wholesale price index (WPI) and bringing a larger number of medicines under price control, could wipe out 12 per cent of the pharmaceutical sector's turnover. This means, nearly Rs 12,000 crore of the total turnover of Rs 1 lakh crore would be eroded.

FDCs are a combination of two or more drugs in a single pill. While the idea is to benefit the patient in terms of faster recovery, many experts feel some therapeutic groups, when clubbed together, might lead to drug resistance. Some also says doses should be customised for individual patients and should not come in fixed doses.

19. [Wockhardt, GlaxoSmithKline, Griffon get Delhi HC relief from ban on FDC drugs](#) – Mint

The Delhi high court on Friday granted interim relief to pharmaceutical firms Wockhardt Ltd, GlaxoSmithKline Asia Pvt. Ltd and Griffon Pvt. Ltd from a government order last week that banned some fixed dose combination (FDC) drugs.

In the last four days, the high court has granted interim relief to several of the 21 drug makers affected by the notification involving a total of 344 combination drugs.

An FDC contains two or more active drug ingredients in a fixed ratio of doses. According to US healthcare provider IMS Health, almost half the drugs sold in India in 2014 were FDC drugs.

20. [Aadhaar, SYL and govt ads top legal developments of the week](#) – Mint

The last week saw some very important developments, including the Aadhaar bill being passed by Parliament, the Supreme Court allowing photographs of chief ministers in a win for a more federal structure of the government, SC intervention on the Punjab-Haryana water dispute and staying bans on several fixed dose drugs.

Delhi high court stays ban on fixed dose combination drugs

Through the week, the Delhi high court stayed a ban imposed on several fixed dose combination drugs. The government banned 344 FDC drugs after a panel of experts found that they posed a health risk. The first of these orders came on Tuesday, when Pfizer's cough syrup Corex was allowed back in the market after a stay on the ban. Wockhardt Ltd, GlaxoSmithKline Asia Pvt. Ltd and Griffon Pvt. Ltd, Abbott India and Macleods Pharma, Procter and Gamble Hygiene and Health Care (P&G), Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Reckitt Benckiser, Piramal Enterprises Ltd and Alembic Pharma Ltd are others who have been allowed the same relief by the Delhi high court.

21. [Who banned my cough syrup? And why?](#) – The Hindu Business Line

The drug regulator should be vigilant, and keep consumers fully informed

Over the weekend, Corex, Vicks Action 500 Extra, Saridon, D'cold and Phensedyl went from being household names to becoming outlawed products.

And that's because they featured on the Health Ministry's list of 344 combination products banned for posing a risk to humans besides having "no therapeutic justification". But even before the week ran out, a clutch of companies secured interim injunctions from the Delhi High Court against the ban on their products. The hearings begin next week. So where does that leave the consumer, who has just been told by the government that several medicines available till the other day are now unsafe?

The 288-page notification certainly holds no answers. There is no advisory to consumers on why these medicines are unsafe or what patients need to do if they have been taking any of these combination medicines.

22. [\*\*63% increase in extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis cases\*\*](#) – Hindustan Times

An increasing number of patients in the city are contracting the tuberculosis (TB) bacteria which do not respond to the known anti-tuberculosis drugs. Between 2014 and 2015, the municipal corporation saw a 63% increase in the number of patients being diagnosed of extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB).

In these patients, doctors said that the first and second line drugs which are a cocktail of about 12 medicines are ineffective. Deaths owing to TB during the said period increased by 12% -most people who die of TB have the resistant bacteria.

23. [\*\*'Miracle drug' for resistant TB to be rolled out for trial today\*\*](#) – The Times of India

A 'miracle drug' to battle multi-drug resistant tuberculosis MDR-TB, and extensively-drug resistant TB (XDR-TB), will be rolled out on Monday in six public hospitals across the country. This is part of a co-ordinated programme between the government and Johnson & Johnson, whose pharma arm Janssen has manufactured the drug.

Named 'Bedaquiline' (trade name Sirturo), the drug is perhaps the first in decades to have a potential to dramatically improve MDR-TB treatment outcomes, and reduce the number of people who die from the disease.

24. [\*\*TB rages on, 20% rise in no. of cases last year\*\*](#) – The Times of India

The tuberculosis epidemic, that kills two Indians every three minutes showed no signs of abating in 2015 as the city registered a 20% increase in the number of patients registered for treatment over the last year. The worst form of tuberculosis, extensively drug resistant TB (XDR TB), rose by a whopping 63% in the same period. BMC's TB statistics showed that XDR cases rose from 396 in 2014 to 645 in 2015. Deaths, too, rose by 13% as 1,506 TB patients died in 2015.

The civic officials, however, interpreted the rise in incidence in public health terms: more patients who would otherwise have remained 'hidden' are being diagnosed and treated. In the run-up to World TB Day (on March 24), BMC additional municipal commissioner Sanjeev Deshmukh said that the city's diagnostic capability had increased in the last four years: it already has 24 GeneXpert machines to diagnose multidrug resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB) within two hours and four more would be added shortly

25. [\*\*'NDA scoring on incremental reforms, big changes take time'\*\*](#) – The Hindu

he NDA government has succeeded in pushing through incremental reforms, though big-ticket changes are taking longer than promised, UK India Business Council chairperson Patricia Hewitt told The Hindu. A former trade minister in the Tony Blair government, Ms Hewitt said even governments with strong leaders take time to evolve and mature, citing the case of Margaret Thatcher who managed to push big reforms like privatisation only in her second term in office.

The violent Jat stir that brought Haryana to a halt, and could flare up again, is a big source of worry for investors, said Ms Hewitt, who visits the Council's India office in Gurgaon at least six times a year.

The USIBC has claimed they got a private assurance from the government on compulsory licensing not being imposed on their intellectual property rights. Your comments...

I don't know and I am not going to comment about public statements about private reassurances. In the case of pharma, we need to look at how we can develop a sustainable IP framework which enables companies that are often investing large sums of money in drug development to make a reasonable return, but balance that with the imperatives of medicines for all. We are working with some of our own partners including GSK and Cipla to look at this.

26. [Data cafe: India miles behind others on innovation](#) – The Financial Express

The world's fastest growing major economy is still far behind its Asian counterparts in terms of innovation, according to data released by World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). India saw a drop in international patent applications to 1,423 under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in 2015, while Japan (44,235), China (29,846) and Korea (14,626) figured in the top-10 list, registering a rise of 20%, 14% and 7%, respectively, from last year. India fared no better in terms of global trademark filings under the Madrid System; it ranked 36th with only 150 trademarks filed in 2015, down from 153 in 2014 when it had seen a more than 70% increase in trademark registrations.