

FDA takes serious note of albumin shortage, meets producer today

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Taking a serious cognisance of dna report 'Mumbai faces albumin shortage' (published on August 11), state's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will meet the producer of the product on Friday. In this meeting FDA wants to know the exact reason of the shortage and try to take measures to overcome it.

Mumbai has been facing acute shortage of this drug for last one year forcing the patients' relatives to run pillar to post and also pay extra money.

Dr Harshadeep Kamble, FDA commissioner, said, "We have received several complaints about shortage of albumin. Patients' relatives are struggling to procure it. We spoke to officials from Reliance Life Sciences, one of the companies that produces albumin in the state. Now we have planned a meeting with them on Friday. A company official has informed us that they unable to get sufficient raw material to make albumin, so, they are not able to meet the demand for it. There is a huge gap between demand and supply."

LIFE AT STAKE

City faces albumin shortage yet again

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Mumbai: The family of a 52-year-old patient, Dinesh Chavan (name changed), suffering from liver cirrhosis, is literally living at the edge as they are making desperate attempts to procure albumin -- a life-saving drug.

Speaking to dna, Chavan's son said that his father needs to be given two vials of albumin daily for the next seven days. He is currently admitted to the Dr LH Hirnandani hospital, Powai.

"I am running from pillar to post for the last seven days. I am ready to pay double the amount," said Chavan's son.

According to doctors, the injection has been in short supply for over a year. Dr Geeta Billa, hepatologist at Dr LH Hirnan-

She said that albumin shortage has hit the treatment of patients with kidney diseases, acute liver failure and burns.

Dr Billa, who is also Chavan's treating doctor, said: "This patient has come with acute kidney failure and has been suffering from liver cirrhosis. If we don't administer him albumin

Govt reacts

Dr Harshdeep Kamble, Food and Drugs Commissioner, said: "I had directed pharma companies to increase the stock. If there is still a shortage, I will have to look into the matter. It is a serious issue."

injection, we won't be able to reverse the kidney failure and perhaps will not be able to save him. There are many patients like him who are eagerly waiting for the injection."

Because of the shortage, doctors are using the drug judiciously. Dr Ravi Mohanka, head of liver transplantation in Global Hospital, said,

"On and off, we face a shortage. Therefore, we are being selective. Not all liver failure patients require it."

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been taken by the government so levels of calcium in the body and

It helps in maintaining levels of calcium

Albumin, a component of human blood, is produced by the liver. Its function is to maintain levels of calcium in the body and to transport nutrients or drugs through the bloodstream. The body can suffer a shortage of albumin if a patient is affected by liver disease, kidney failure, burns or malnourishment. Also, after major surgeries such as kidney or liver transplant, the body does not produce adequate albumin.

to resolve it. If they need any kind of permission from the state government or central government to increase the production of this product we will definitely try to help them. There is an urgent need of this injection," said Dr Kamble.

On the condition of anonymity, a senior doctor said most doctors, who prescribe albumin are aware that it is not so easily available in market. "We have been facing a shortage of albumin for over a year. No action has been taken by the government so far. In June also, the city had faced an albumin shortage. This albumin shortage has hit the treatment of patients with kidney diseases, acute liver failure and burns," said the doctor.

Transfusion of human albumin is needed for proper healing or to reduce water retention and swelling caused in the body due to infection or disease. Only a few companies, three to four, say chemists, manufacture this medicine.

"This is a great step by FDA to look in to the shortage and resolve it at the earliest," said Dr Shrirang Bicchu, Nephrologist, Bombay Hospital.

An official from company has informed us that they unable to get sufficient raw material to make albumin, which, has led to the shortage. —Dr Harshadeep Kamble, FDA commissioner

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"In this meeting we will also try to understand their (producer's) problem and try



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