# Heparin recall and India

Sir,

The write-up "Story of heparin recall: what can India do?' was timely. While unhealthy pigs have been blamed for the mishap it is not clear if the over-sulfated chondroitin sulfate was intentionally introduced. The product has been recalled even

in countries where no adverse effects were noted.[1]

There are important lessons for India. The problem can arise in any product and therefore our vigilance should extend beyond heparin. Unfortunately, we in India lack a system wherein such adverse effects can be detected. For all that went wrong, at least the pharmaceutical company acted swiftly when an increased adverse event rate was found. Is this true for Indian companies and are our laws strong enough to ensure such a swift response?

The lessons from the heparin recall go beyond the current incident and the molecule in question. It is vital that the clinicians are vigilant to detect unexpected events or unexpected frequency of expected events resulting from any drug they prescribe. Also a system should be in place for the clinicians to report such events to a central regulator. Another issue is about products being exported from India. Are they being regulated? Any problems with such products can bring infamy to the system as a whole. It will be pertinent to remember the recent report in the Journal of American Medical Association which indicted Ayurvedic medicines purchased from India via Internet as containing toxic metals including lead, mercury and arsenic in unacceptable amounts.[2] One is not sure about the contents of varied products being sold under the tag of 'herbal medicines' across the country. The wise learn from others' mistakes. It is time we learn from this heparin incident and ensure that India does not face a similar situation in the days to come.

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## References

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