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India bans pain killer 36 years after the US did so

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New Delhi: The Indian health ministry has banned the sale of three medicines after learning about the health risks associated with them.

Manufacture and sale of three drugs, painkiller Analgin, anti-diabetes drug Pioglitazone and anti-depressant Deanxit has been banned under Section 26A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 with immediate effect, the ministry notified.

Pain reliever Analgin, that was banned in the US in 1977 has been banned in India after almost 36 years. Even the anti-diabetes drug Pioglitazone was withdrawn from France in 2011 after it was revealed that it causes and increased risk of bladder cancer.

In Sweden, the risk of causing potentially fatal conditions led to Analgin being withdrawn from the market in 1997. Post this, the drug was also banned in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and France amongst other countries.

The drug industry in India has protested against this ban claiming that it would only force several patients to move to more expensive alternatives and insulin. "There are over 30 lakh patients using this drug. There is no evidence to show that the drug has caused any adverse drug reactions in India, despite being marketed in the country since 2001," said Dr D G Shah, secretary general, Indian Pharma Alliance.

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In an effort to streamline the functioning of the Indian drug regulator, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) has been asked to suspend the sale of globally banned drugs in the Indian market. The move comes after a parliamentary panel enquiry revealed serious violations in granting marketing licences in India.