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Biotechnology & Health:

Health Policy & Public Health

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has observed a troubling rise in childhood obesity in India, with recent studies showing the country has one of the highest numbers of obese children globally. Experts attribute this to sedentary lifestyles and excessive screen time.

In a significant move, the Indian government has directed all pharmaceutical companies to revise the maximum retail price (MRP) of medicines and medical devices, effective September 22. This is a result of new GST reforms that slash the tax on most medicines from 12% to 5%, with some life-saving and cancer drugs becoming completely exempt. This change aims to make healthcare more affordable for consumers.

Biotechnology & Corporate News

The **Indian Patent Office (IPO)** has revoked the patent on Novartis's cardiac drug, Vymada, citing a lack of novelty. This decision could pave the way for more affordable generic versions of the drug to enter the Indian market. India's patent laws include provisions aimed at preventing "evergreening" by pharmaceutical companies.

Roche Pharma has partnered with ten government hospitals in India to improve clinical trial capabilities. The initiative, part of Roche's global Advanced Inclusive Research (AIR) Site Alliance, aims to increase the participation of Indian sites in global clinical trials and bring new healthcare innovations to the country faster.

The **Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC)** is reviewing a student demand to include biotechnology in the Jharkhand Eligibility Test (JET) for the appointment of assistant professors and for PhD admissions. The move highlights the growing importance of the field in academic and research sectors.

Research & Innovation

In a lecture at Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), a molecular biologist from the US encouraged young scientists to use genetic engineering and biotechnology to improve ornamental horticulture. The lecture specifically covered research on improving stress tolerance in flowering plants like geraniums and developing rapid propagation methods using callus cultures.

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A new study has revealed that an antibiotic susceptibility testing device developed by **IIT-Madras** can provide results in about an hour, compared to the traditional two-to-three-day process. This low-cost, chip-based device is expected to significantly improve the efficiency of diagnosing and treating bacterial infections.

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MCQS

1. Based on the provided text, which of the following is identified as a contributing factor to the rise in childhood obesity in India?

- A. Unavailability of healthy food options
- B. Lack of physical education in schools
- C. Sedentary lifestyles and excessive screen time
- D. High cost of healthy foods

Answer: C

The text explicitly states that "Experts attribute this to sedentary lifestyles and excessive screen time." Options A, B, and D are not mentioned in the provided information.

2. What is the primary objective of the Indian government's new GST reforms on medicines and medical devices?

- A. To increase government revenue
- B. To promote the use of generic drugs
- C. To make healthcare more affordable for consumers
- D. To regulate pharmaceutical companies' profits

Answer: C

The text says, "This change aims to make healthcare more affordable for consumers," which is the direct result of the reduced tax on medicines. While the other options might be indirect consequences, the stated primary goal is affordability.

3. The Indian Patent Office (IPO) revoked the patent for Novartis's drug, Vymada, citing which reason?

- A. High cost of the drug
- B. Lack of novelty
- C. Side effects of the drug
- D. The company's unethical practices

Answer: B

The text clearly states that the IPO revoked the patent "citing a lack of novelty." This decision aligns with India's patent laws which include provisions to prevent "evergreening," a practice where companies try to extend patent protection on existing drugs by making minor modifications.

4. The partnership between Roche Pharma and ten government hospitals in India is part of what global initiative?

- A. Global Health Initiative
- B. Advanced Inclusive Research (AIR) Site Alliance
- C. Clinical Trial Partnership Program





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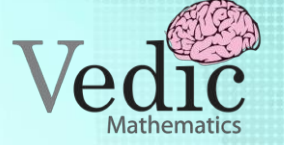
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D. Research and Development Alliance

Answer: B

The passage states that the initiative is part of Roche's "global Advanced Inclusive Research (AIR) Site Alliance." This program is aimed at increasing the participation of Indian sites in global clinical trials.

5. Why is the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) reviewing a student demand to include biotechnology in the Jharkhand Eligibility Test (JET)?

- A. To reduce the number of qualified applicants
- B. To increase focus on medical fields
- C. To highlight the growing importance of biotechnology in academia and research
- D. To replace traditional science subjects with biotechnology

Answer: C

The text says, "The move highlights the growing importance of the field in academic and research sectors." The other options are incorrect interpretations not supported by the passage.

6. A molecular biologist at Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) encouraged young scientists to use genetic engineering to improve ornamental horticulture. What specific application was mentioned in the lecture?

- A. Developing new types of fruits
- B. Improving stress tolerance in flowering plants and developing rapid propagation methods
- C. Creating pest-resistant crops
- D. Enhancing the nutritional value of vegetables

Answer: B

The text explicitly mentions the lecture "specifically covered research on improving stress tolerance in flowering plants like

geraniums and developing rapid propagation methods using callus cultures."

7. How does the new antibiotic susceptibility testing device developed by IIT-Madras improve the diagnostic process?

- A. It makes the results more accurate.
- B. It reduces the cost of treatment.
- C. It provides results in a shorter time frame.
- D. It can test for multiple infections at once.

Answer: C

The passage states that the device "can provide results in about an hour, compared to the traditional two-to-three-day process," directly addressing the time efficiency of the diagnostic process.

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