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Imitation drugs: Manufacturers to carry out checks

P. Chandra Sagar

KAMPAR, Sun. - Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayub today called on drug manufacturers to carry out checks on outlets in rural areas including land schemes selling imitation medicine.

"I will give them a week to carry out the checks in coffee shops and stalls in these places and submit a report on imitation medicines to me," he told reporters after opening the Kampar Umno division meeting here.

"I will act and decide on the next course of action once the manufacturers submit their reports," he added.

He also suggested that the manufacturers send their own officers to buy the medicine in these areas and take them back for laboratory tests.

According to Megat Junid, imitation medicine manufacturers had established a good distribution network and marketing strategy to sell their products.

The Government must safeguard the interests of the lower income group which forms the majority of the consumers in the rural areas.

Megat Junid said the irresponsible manufacturers would not market their products in urban areas but would supply them to rural places to hoodwink the people on the performance of the drugs.

The Ministry would also urge genuine manufacturers to hold exhibitions on imitation and genuine medicines in conjunction with the World Consumer Day on Aug 28 to be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"We hope the manufacturers will be able to complete the checks on the rural areas and exhibit their findings during the celebrations for the benefit of the public," he added.

He said genuine drug manufacturers had the manpower and technical know-how and expertise, which are better than some of the facilities in Government hospitals, to detect the imitation products.

Other manufacturers producing consumers goods should also follow suit, he said.

They should come out with posters to be put up and distributed at public places on ways to differentiate the genuine and imitation goods.

Megat Junid said there were only 10 to 15 types of medicines said to be imitations but each of the products could be a big figure. At present there are 11,000 registered medicines in the country.

The imitation medicine is a not a new industry as mentioned by acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim recently.

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