



Generic Confusion

This refers to the news 'Prescribing Generic Name of Drugs May Become Mandatory' (ET, May 23). By taking this measure, the government expects medicine costs to come down by more than half. However, like many well-meaning government initiatives, this could spell more trouble than relief to the consumer. When a doctor prescribes medicine, he prefers the drug made by a reputed company in order to protect himself. Once a prescription gives only the generic name, the decision of which company's product must be dispensed is left to the discretion of the chemist. Whom should the patient trust? The informed decision of a qualified doctor or the discretion of a pharmacist whose choice might be influenced by the margins and discounts? Moreover, the pharmaceutical industry has had the Drug Prices Control Order. Is this not working? If not, the government should scrap it.

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