

International Public Health University (IPHU)

Day 4 – 09/11/2018

Access to Medicines stream

The day's activities started with the [Amit introducing the stream](#) on Access to Medicines.

*“Medicine is social science. And politics is nothing, but medicine at a larger scale”
- Virchow*

He went on to talk about Alma Ata and why it is still important. Health has multiple components, of which healthcare is one and healthcare has multiple components out of which medicines is one.

Who has the obligations to ensure access to medicines – State, Pharma companies and Medical Professionals. Which are major barriers to access to medicines: Prices, Problems of distribution, monopolies, quality of medicine, inappropriate use of medicine etc. History of local production of medicines & drugs in India and how it evolved to become less people friendly in the recent decade, by contrasting how Indian pharma companies were crucial in reducing the cost of HIV/AIDS treatment initially and then lined up for licences for production of costly medicines (even before the patents were granted). He also introduced TRIPS plus to the participants.

This was followed by group discussion on the following questions

1. What is your current involvement / interest in the field of Access to Medicines?
2. What do you think are the important areas where you / we can work upon?

The summary of presentations of the groups can be found [here](#).

Post-lunch David briefly discussed National Regulations and the need to maintain Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), Evaluations and Pharmacovigilance. Gopakumar further talked about the [politics of Global Regulation of medicines](#) and other health products, the role of state and the kinds of Pharma industries (Originators, Generics) and the need for existence of regulators. There was questions and discussions on clinical trials, how it works and its ethics. The transnational regulatory networks and their agenda of harmonising regulations with the intention of easing the regulatory practices within countries. How the WHO is supposed to regulate and how it ends up in regulating in practice (Conflict of interest, ICH and its questionable relations with WHO). The last topic of debate was about Counterfeit medicines, how it came to be defined and how the word has been used to protest the Interests of Big Pharma, at the cost of access to medicines.

Some photos from the day (and evening) are [here](#).