BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

China initiates crackdown on pharma industry

July 18, 2013 | Regulatory | By BioSpectrum Bureau



Singapore: China has announced a nationwide crackdown on the sale of illegal medicines, ahead of the GlaxoSmithKline bribery scandal that has questioned the regulations placed in the country.

The crackdown, said China's State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA) would last for six months and would aim at tightening industry regulation. The campaign will target illegal online drug sales and the sale of fake traditional Chinese medicine.

"We must resolutely punish illegal acts, expose illegal enterprises, recall problematic products," Mr Wu Zhen, the agency's deputy commissioner said in a statement.

The crackdown comes two days after Chinese police accused GlaxoSmithKline of bribing officials and doctors to boost sales and raise the price of its medicines in China.

The food and drug agency did not specifically mention GSK, but a spokesman for China's Commerce Ministry said authorities would not hold back punishing companies engaged in bribery.

Ã?Â

"Whether it's a domestic or foreign-invested enterprise, once it has violated Chinese law, it will be sanctioned," Mr Shen Danyang said at a news conference.

Chinese regulators for years are said to have been trying to find a solution to the problem of widespread counterfeit drugs and false advertising.

Last August, Chinese police detained almost 2,000 people in a sweep on fake drugs, seizing more than $180 million worth of counterfeit products and destroying some 1,100 production facilities.

The seized fake drugs purported to deal with illnesses ranging from diabetes to high blood pressure and rabies and had been advertised on television, online and in newspapers.

Beijing also promised to clean up its act following the deaths of at least 149 Americans who received contaminated Chinese supplies of the blood-thinner heparin in 2008.