

## Rat poison linked to Chhattisgarh sterilisation deaths

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**Singapore:** Recently a government-run family planning campaign in the state of Chhattisgarh in India ended tragically for at least 15 women who lost their lives amid a sterilization procedure. There are allegations that the women were administered antibiotics tainted with rat poison during the procedure.

Preliminary tests of ciprocin tablets made by Mahawar pharmaceuticals indicated the presence of zinc phosphide in the tablets, a chemical commonly found in rat poison. Samples have been sent to Kolkata and Delhi to verify the contamination.

Mr Ramesh Mahawar, managing director, Mahawar pharmaceuticals, said that the company did not indulge in any malpractice and had followed all safety measures while formulating the drug. He also added that the information related to the incident was exaggerated and misquoted.

Mr Mahawar said that the company will totally cooperate with the government in the investigation procedure. The state government has banned the sale and distribution of all medicines manufactured by Mahawar Pharmaceuticals. It has seized 200,000 tablets of Ciprocin 500 and more than 4 million other tablets made by the company.

The company had dispatched 152,000 tablets from the same batch in the first week of October to four drug stockists in districts across Chhattisgarh. This is not the first time that Mahawar pharmaceutical is in legal scrutiny for quality compliance. Earlier in 2012, the company was banned from manufacturing for 90 days following a probe that led to the discovery of sub-standard drugs produced.