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Advancing pharmaceuticals and patient safety in Saudi Arabia: A 2030 vision initiative

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Low-quality medicines deliver sub-optimal clinical outcomes that impact on patients' health and waste precious health resources. It is important to ensure that public funds are spent on healthcare technologies that meet national regulatory bodies such as the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA), quality standards for safety, efficacy, and quality. Medicines quality is a complicated combination of pre-market regulatory specifications, appropriate sourcing of ingredients (active pharmaceutical ingredient (API), excipients, etc.), manufacturing processes, healthcare ecosystem communications, and regular and robust pharmacovigilance practices. A recent conference in Riyadh, sponsored by King Saud University, sought to discuss these issues and develop specific policy recommendations for the Saudi 2030 vision plan. The aim was to discuss regulatory science concepts related to advancing both the quality of medications and patient care in Saudi Arabia, to understand the complexity of the topic of drug quality and its importance relative to patient outcomes and as part of overall clinical practice and to gain knowledge related to the many different aspects of quality, from drug manufacturing through registration, and improving both patient outcomes and pharmacovigilance reporting. Over two days, 30 experts from Riyadh region attended and enriched the discussion. The major theme of the colloquium was the importance of medicines quality. This and other efforts will require more and more creative educational programs for physicians, pharmacists, hospitals, and patients, and most importantly evolving regulations on quality standards and oversight by Saudi health authorities.

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