



Mains Practice Question

Case study

You are a government official working in the health department of a state notices that the medicines supplied to government hospitals are of sub-standard quality. On further investigation, you found out that the procurement department has been taking bribes from pharmaceutical companies to supply low-quality medicines at higher rates. You bring this to the attention of your superiors, but they refuse to take any action as they are also involved in the corruption.

What would you do in this situation?

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Approach

- Start your answer by briefly explaining the case.
- Discuss about various stakeholders and ethical issues involved in the case.
- Discuss the various options available in front of government officer.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

- The above case revolve around a government official working in the health department of a state discovers that the medicines supplied to government hospitals are of sub-standard quality.
 - Further investigation reveals that the procurement department has been accepting bribes from pharmaceutical companies to supply low-quality medicines at higher rates. Despite bringing this to the attention of their superiors, no action is taken as they are also involved in the corruption.

Body

- **Stakeholders Involved:**
 - The government official,
 - Procurement department,
 - Health ministry,
 - Pharmaceutical companies,
 - Patients who rely on the government hospitals for their healthcare needs,
 - Society at large.
- **Ethical Issues Involved:**
 - Corruption,
 - Abuse of power,
 - Neglect of duty to provide quality healthcare to citizens,
 - Potential harm to patients due to sub-standard medicines.
- **Options Available:**
 - **Report the issue to Higher Authorities or an Anti-Corruption Agency:** I would raise the matter to higher authorities as my seniors are also involved in the corruption.
 - **Pro:** This could result in an official investigation and potential legal action against

those involved in the corruption.

- **Con:** There is a risk of retaliation from those involved in the corruption.
- **Gather Evidence and Approach the Media:** I will try to gather information and tangible evidence to support my case in media.
 - **Pro:** This could raise public awareness and put pressure on those involved in the corruption to take action.
 - **Con:** This could result in negative publicity for the government and potentially harm the government official's career, as this will go against the code of conduct of civil servants.
- **Seek Legal Advice and Pursue Legal Action:** I would seek legal guidance to understand the nuances of case and take it further to legal action in court.
 - **Pro:** This could result in legal consequences for those involved in the corruption and potentially prevent further harm to patients.
 - **Con:** This could be a lengthy and costly process with no guarantee of success and it's against my code of conduct and further it will hamper my work responsibility by going to court on regular basis.
- **Reach out to other government officials or organizations:** I would try to connect with officials from another department/organization to make them aware of wrongdoings in my department.
 - **Pro:** This could result in support from others who share the same concerns and potentially lead to collective action to address the issue.
 - **Con:** There is a risk that others may not be willing or able to help and harm the reputation of health department.

Conclusion

In this case, the most ethical option would be to **report the issue to higher authorities or an anti-corruption agency**. While this option comes with potential risks, such as retaliation against the government official, but as a government official it my duty to prioritize the well-being of the patients who rely on government hospitals for their healthcare needs. It is crucial to take action against corruption in the procurement of medicines to ensure that patients receive the quality healthcare they deserve.