FIP—analysis predicts growth of pharmacy workforce

Stephanie Kohl

In early September during its 78th World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) released the results from the largest retrospective study on pharmaceutical workforce capacity. The publication describes trends of the workforce relating to gender distribution and capacity growth by taking into account figures from 2006 to 2016.

Overall, the analysis suggests an increase in the global capacity of pharmacists by 40% in the coming 12 years. The WHO Europe and Eastern Mediterranean regions displayed the highest absolute changes over the 10-year period assessed in the report. Growth appears to be slower in low-income countries. Other key trends described in the report include a steady increase in the proportion of women in the pharmacy workforce. Due to the growth of the workforce until 2030, the report highlights the need for further investigation to inform national strategic pharmacy workforce planning.

EC: PAPER ON THE OBLIGATION OF CONTINUOUS SUPPLY TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF SHORTAGES OF MEDICINES

In response to a call from the Council and European Parliament, the European Commission (EC) collected evidence from 27 European Union (EU) Member States and Norway to monitor the obligation of marketing authorisation holders to ensure continuous supply of medicines laid down in the EU legislation. The paper on the obligation of continuous supply to tackle the problem of shortages of medicines summarises the findings of this exercise. It addresses the responsibilities of both manufacturers and wholesalers and bases itself on Member State responses to a questionnaire on measures implemented in the Member State territories in the context of Article 81 of Directive 2001/83/EC, which was launched in autumn 2017.

Marketing authorisation holders are obliged to ensure supply sufficiently in advance and in adequate quantities to cover demand from patients. Vigilance is

needed for products whose manufacturing is dependent on a single facility and for which no or only limited alternatives are available. For products whose discontinuation of supply poses a potential risk for public health, Member States may require the development of shortage prevention plans by marketing authorisation holders. In relation to wholesalers their obligation to continuously supply pharmacists was highlighted in the paper. In addition to the responsibilities, the paper also outlines limitations and provides information on the possibility of Member States to introduce restrictions on the supply of medicines to other operators in the EU. These restrictions should aim at mitigating the risk of shortages of medicines.

In relation to the shortage problem, it should be noted that the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists will be sharing the results of its 2018 Medicines Shortage Survey at the launch event of the report on 7 November 2018. For more information, please regularly check updates published on our website and social media accounts.

COST ACTION CA 15105: SURVEY ON PATIENTS' OPINION ABOUT DRUG SHORTAGES

COST Action CA 15105 on medicines shortages invites you to participate in a qualitative study regarding patients' perspective about medicine shortages during hospital stay. Drug shortages are a global problem which can result in significant implications for the patient. Despite the importance of the problem, no objective data are available on patient impact. This survey aims at quantifying the impact of drug shortages at the patient level in the hospital environment.

Hospital pharmacists are encouraged to question interested patients who are willing to share their experience with medicines shortages. Feedback from patients should be submitted by completing the short questionnaire by 1 December 2018. Questions in relation to this survey activity can be addressed by email to Darija Kuruc Poje (darijakuruc21@gmail.com). Patients can also respond to the survey themselves. The survey is accessible via the following link: <https://bit.ly/2sRVhFh>.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: WORKING DOCUMENT ON COMBATING HIV/AIDS, VIRAL HEPATITIS AND TUBERCULOSIS

Prior to the 22nd International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam and the World Hepatitis Day, the European Commission released a staff working document on combating HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis B and C and tuberculosis in the European Union (EU) and neighbouring countries. It contains an overview of EU policy initiatives and activities which aim at helping Member States with meeting the global sustainable development goal of ending the AIDS and tuberculosis epidemics by 2030 and to fight hepatitis and other communicable diseases.

The staff working document presents current epidemiological data on HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis and tuberculosis in Europe, as well as a state of play on the actions taken towards the implementation of sustainable development goal 3.3. In relation to the main policy initiatives pursued by the EU, it should be noted that the support of Member States stretches across several policy areas, including but not limited to public health, research, drugs policy, development cooperation, accession and neighbourhood policy as well as European structural funds. The overall observations underline the EU's influence on the ground and the good initiatives that lead to several successes in tackling HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis and tuberculosis.

STUDY ON CROSS-BORDER HEALTH SERVICES

The European Commission has published a study on cross-board health services in the European Union (EU) which aims at proposing recommendations for improving the current level of information provision to patients by National Contact Points (NCPs). Overall, the study found a general lack of awareness about the existing measures that were introduced by the Cross Border Healthcare Directive (2011/24/EU), including the NCPs.

Even though NCPs made considerable progress since the publication of an evaluative study in 2014, further improvements are needed. In particular, information provided via NCP websites in relation to patients' rights, quality and safety standards, and reimbursement of cross-border healthcare costs is a concern. Moreover, the report found considerable organisational differences between the NCPs of Member States. A practice-oriented toolbox as well as training materials aim at helping to improve the shortcomings.

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Additionally, a set of guiding principles was developed to ensure that NCP services throughout the Union become more uniform, patient-centred and adhere to legal requirements.

HTA: OUTLOOK TO THE MONTH AHEAD

Prior to the summer break, the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) discussed the amendments to the draft report on the Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on health technology assessment (HTA) by Member of the European Parliament Soledad Cabezon Ruiz. In particular the discussion focused on the scope of the Commission's proposal and the coverage of medical devices by the regulation.

New developments are expected in mid-September, once the ENVI Committee votes on the draft report. The opinions of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection will feed into this discussion.

The European Association of Hospital Pharmacists published its response to the proposal for a regulation on HTA in early August. It welcomes the Commission's efforts to strengthen the cooperation between Member States in the field of HTA. Moreover, the association urges the Council and the Parliament to enhance the involvement of stakeholders. In particular the role of healthcare professionals, including hospital pharmacists, should be strengthened to ensure that their extensive experience and knowledge in medicine use is used in the HTA processes.

FIP: THE POTENTIAL FOR PHARMACISTS TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN THEIR OFTEN OVERLOOKED ROLE AS INFORMAL CAREGIVERS

The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has released a report on how

pharmacists, as the most accessible healthcare professionals, can empower women in their role as informal caregivers. The report, 'Pharmacists supporting women and responsible use of medicines', aims to provide a platform for a change and collaborations in women empowerment and better care for their own health. The report revealed that due to their direct link to patients and caregivers, hospital as well as community pharmacists are ideally placed in the healthcare system to empower women in their role as informal caregivers, communicate to women the need to be informed and support women's health literacy. Supporting evidence that underpinned these findings was collected via a literature review as well as by means of a survey activity undertaken among FIP member organisations.

EU-OSHA: CALL FOR ENTRIES TO THE GOOD PRACTICE AWARDS 2018–2019

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has opened the call for applications for the Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards 2018–2019. The 14th edition of the Good Practice Awards is part of EU-OSHA's campaign 'Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances'.

The call is open to real-life examples of innovative and effective occupational safety and health management in the handling and use of dangerous substances. Entries should clearly describe the type of good management practices that have been implemented in the workplace and outline their achievements. Good practice entries can be submitted by all organisations that are active in the European Union (EU), as well as in candidate countries and potential candidate countries.

The jury of the Good Practice Awards is looking for recent initiatives that can be replicated in other workplaces across

the EU and which show demonstrable improvements in safety and health in relation to dangerous substances. In addition, the measures should prioritise the collective over the individual and actively involve the workers themselves. In case your organisation has undertaken such an initiative, submit it to your national focal point to participate in the Good Practice Awards 2018–2019.

EMA PUBLISHES DATABASE ON ALL MEDICINES AUTHORISED IN THE EEA

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) recently published a database containing information on all medicines authorised in the European Economic Area (EEA). Its scope covers products which have a valid marketing authorisation. The database provides information for the following data fields: product name (product short name: brand name or the concatenation of the generic name and the company name), active substance, route of administration, country of authorisation and name of the marketing authorisation holder. In addition, it details the country of location of the pharmacovigilance system master file and the marketing authorisation holder's contact email address and telephone number for pharmacovigilance enquiries. The information contained in the database will be updated periodically by the EMA.

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