Hospital pharmacist's role in procurement ensuring that every patient receives the medication they need

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During its General Assembly in mid-June, the 35 member associations of the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP) adopted a position on procurement. To ensure the achievement of procurement quality and to assure the continuity of supply of quality medicines to patients, EAHP's member associations stressed the need to involve hospital pharmacists in the different types of procurement practices and processes. This includes their engagement at both local and national levels.

As stakeholders in the procurement process, hospital pharmacists play a vital role in ensuring that a functional, safe, cost-effective and reliable hospital formulary is designed. Their perspective in the entire procurement process, starting with the decisions of the drug and therapeutic committee about medicines policy and use within the hospital, will help with the identification of high-risk medicines, link procurement with patient need, and guarantee the implementation of appropriate procedures to reduce vulnerability in the supply chain.

In the complex process of pharmaceutical tendering, a multidisciplinary approach in the medication supply chain is key to enhancing patient safety. To avoid unfavourable outcomes, such as medicines shortages, the design of medicinal tendering mechanisms needs to be anchored in good clinical practice and structured health technology assessment that is supported by a sufficient evidence base and at the same time respects the European legislative framework on public procurement.

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EAHP UPDATES POSITION ON AMR

In June, the General Assembly of the EAHP adopted a revised position paper on antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The position focuses on the prudent use of antimicrobial drugs through antibiotic stewardship to ensure efficient therapy for patients with life-threatening infections.

To maintain the efficacy of antimicrobial drugs and to prevent further spread of AMR, the EAHP demands an interprofessional approach. Antibiotic stewardship teams, which are still far away from being routine in European hospitals, could help to alleviate the situation. Patients are not yet actively asking for the use of antibiotic

stewardship teams in hospitals; however, scientific results show their contribution to resistance development, the efficient reduction of antibiotic overuse and even cost savings. Therefore, the EAHP calls on national governments and health system managers to use the specialised background and knowledge of the hospital pharmacists in multiprofessional antibiotic stewardship teams.

However, not only stewardship teams are needed to combat AMR but also universal application of infection prevention and control measures is necessary. Existing toolkits such as the one for healthcare professionals in hospitals and other healthcare settings of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control should be used by hospital pharmacists to increase the uptake of prophylactic measures. Moreover, in light of the 'One Health approach' of the European Commission's One Health Action Plan, the EAHP strongly supports regulatory oversight and proper implementation of measures in the veterinary and agriculture sectors on European, national and local levels.

In relation to the support of research and development, the EAHP believes that despite the commitments of the European Commission included in the One Health Action Plan further incentives are needed. Consequently, the EAHP urges increased investment to support the development of innovative proposals and the encouragement of practice-based research projects to investigate new fields of infectious disease control such as immunotherapy. In addition, the EAHP's position paper highlights the need for governments to make arrangements that essential antibiotics will be maintained on the market with contingency stock level arrangements and alternative production by hospital pharmacists enabled where necessary.

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