EAHP opinion on pharmaceuticals in the environment

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Hospital pharmacists are concerned about the negative effects of pharmaceuticals both on the environment itself as well as on animals, humans and patients. Consequently, the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP) welcomes the adoption of the Communication on a European Union Strategic Approach to Pharmaceuticals in the Environment. COM(2019) 128 final. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee: 'European Union Strategic Approach to Pharmaceuticals in the Environment'. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1553078480901&uri=CELEX:52019DC0128>

It is noted that standards to prevent environmental contamination are not complied with at all production sites, especially those that are situated beyond Europe's borders. Responsibility has to be taken to ensure that drugs and their components distributed and used in the European Union (EU) are produced without avoidable environmental pollution. Measures supporting the uptake of greener manufacturing and the improvement in the design and implementation of environmental risk assessment are a good step in the right direction and should be pursued in a timely and transparent manner by the European Commission (EC).

Some drugs are not metabolised and degraded into inactive substances by patients or animals treated with these drugs. For example, some antimicrobials, hormones, cytotoxic agents or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) may be partly excreted unchanged and remain pharmacologically active. The consequences of environmental contamination may be significant, for example, active antimicrobials may induce and trigger antimicrobial resistance in patients and/or animals, thus impeding the national, European and global investments underway in the field of antimicrobial resistance. The need to minimise these negative consequences is of utmost

importance and EAHP fully supports the measures put forward by the EC on the reduction and management of waste. A multistakeholder approach addressing, on the one hand, the design and manufacturing of pharmaceuticals and, on the other hand, best practice sharing among healthcare professionals is a sensible endeavour. The concentration of pharmaceuticals in the environment can be decreased only through meaningful and constant cooperation of all relevant actors.

The Communication, however, lacks acknowledgement of the fact that pharmaceuticals in the environment are also detrimental to patient safety. As healthcare professionals in direct contact with patients, hospital pharmacists as well as doctors and community pharmacists should be encouraged and enabled to educate other healthcare professionals as well as patients about the impact of antimicrobials, hormones, cytotoxic agents and NSAIDs on the environment. Consequently, EAHP is calling on the EC and national governments to ensure continued training of healthcare professionals in best practices in relation to the prevention of pharmaceutical contamination. Such training should be provided both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as through lifelong learning modules.

2019 SYNERGY MASTERCLASS: BROADEN YOUR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PROCUREMENT AND TENDERING

Hospital pharmacists due to their knowledge and skills are specialists in the field of all medicines procurement. They should lead in all phases of the procurement processes and practices to ensure the continuity of supply of cost-effective and quality medicines to patients. To foster the engagement of hospital pharmacists in procurement processes, EAHP is organising its second Synergy Masterclass around the topic of procurement.

The Synergy Masterclass titled 'Procurement, tendering and decision making processes in the hospital setting'—which is sponsored by an educational grant from Amgen—will be held on 4 and 5 October 2019 in Brussels, Belgium. EAHP invites healthcare professionals, representatives from industry and all other interested

parties working in the field of procurement and tendering in the hospital environment to sign up for this educational event.

The speaker, James Kent (National Health Service, UK), Dorte Glinthorg (Danish Medicines Council, Denmark), Francis Arickx (Belgian Social Insurance Institute INAMI, Belgium) John Yfantopoulos (University of Athens, Greece), Hanne Plet (North Denmark Region, Denmark), Jo Swartenbroeckx (University Hospital Antwerp, Belgium) and António Gouveia (Instituto Português de Oncologia de Lisboa, Portugal), will take participants through the key developments. The 2-day programme—through a mix between workshops and lectures—will ensure that participants are able to recall important EU legislation with regard to procurement, list elements of value-based procurement, and recognise the pros and cons of doing procurement and tenders at national, regional and hospital levels, respectively.

For more information please visit EAHP's website at <http://www.eahp.eu/synergy-masterclass/events/procurement>.

EAHP ONLINE LEARNING—BRINGING EDUCATION TO YOUR HOME

The open learning courses of the EAHP offer healthcare professionals an exciting new opportunity to learn online about new developments. The portal was opened in spring 2018 and has since then been expanded. It now offers five different courses focusing on anticoagulation and biosimilar medicines.

Biosimilars in breast cancer—the next challenge takes a closer look at biosimilars like trastuzumab, the key treatment option in HER2-positive patients with breast cancer. This open learning course is particularly interesting for hospital pharmacists involved in oncology as it will equip them with specific knowledge on the quality and clinical background of the approval process. At the same time the course will be exploring the role of biosimilars in budget management in the breast cancer setting, considering all the new therapeutic options available for this disease.

The introduction of new anticoagulants means new options in the prevention and treatment of thromboembolic events. Anticoagulation—from theory to practice seeks to strengthen the role of the hospital pharmacist in maintaining the awareness of new agents, their management, adverse effects and educating the patients about their drugs and importance of adherence.

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After the open learning course, participants will have an increased awareness about the differences between anticoagulants, their pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics. In addition, they will be enabled to describe the management of different anticoagulants in perioperative settings.

Biosimilars in cancer care—the next challenge is approaching the subject of biosimilar medicines from the regulatory angle by presenting participants with the key facts on their approval in the EU as applied to cancer therapy. By understanding the concepts, hospital pharmacists will be enabled to provide a scientific, unbiased approach with a focus on patient care in a world of limited resources. Moreover, open learning course participants will be equipped with the tools to advise how to implement biosimilars of monoclonal antibodies used in cancer therapy.

The evolution of biologicals which are an essential treatment option for a variety of diseases in current medicine is being explored by the course ‘The essentials of biologicals – past, present and future’. Since hospital pharmacists are responsible for selecting and assessing biologicals and biosimilars and monitoring their use, they need to have an in-depth understanding of key principles regarding quality, safety and efficacy. Open learning course participants will learn about the development and authorisation of biosimilars as well as the quality criteria of biologicals. In addition, issues of switching and interchangeability of biologicals will be addressed.

The second open learning course focusing on anticoagulant agents,

‘Anticoagulants - Show me the evidence!’, explains the complications of anticoagulation therapy and provides information that help hospital pharmacists review the differences in pharmacokinetics, efficacy and safety between newer anticoagulant drugs and warfarin. Since adherence plays an important role, key patient counselling points will be conveyed that help hospital pharmacists in educating their patients about their drugs and the importance of their therapy.

All of EAHP’s open learning courses are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) as a provider of continuing pharmacy education. Participants are entitled to receive between 1.5 to 2 ACPE credits, depending on the length of the course. These credits can be obtained after the completion of the course and a short survey.

For more information please visit EAHP’s website at <http://www.eahp.eu/events/open-learning/courses>.

THE EAHP-EPSA STUDENT SCIENCE AWARD IS BACK

The EAHP is proud to announce the opening of the next round of the EAHP-European Pharmaceutical Students' Association (EPSA) Student Science Award. This prestigious prize recognises and honours the best scientific research authored by a pharmacy student or recent graduate. Since 2011 the EAHP-EPSA Student Science Award is offered to one member of the EPSA who has conducted research in the field of hospital and/or clinical pharmacy.

To enter into the competition, students and recent graduates are required to attend the webinar ‘How to write an abstract’, hosted by Nenad Miljković, EAHP Director of Professional Development. Participation in the webinar is obligatory for students wishing to compete for the 2020 EAHP-EPSA Student Science Award.

After the webinar, participating students and recent graduates can obtain detailed feedback on their work prior to submitting their final abstract by 15 November. The abstracts are reviewed in accordance with the criteria of innovation, originality and contribution to the development of hospital pharmacy. The winner will be announced during EAHP’s 25th Congress.

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