

Statement on Hospital Pharmacy specialisation

Hospital Pharmacists are key stakeholders in medication management in hospitals. This is a role which encompasses the entire way in which medicines are selected, supplied, quality assured, prescribed, and administered with the overall aim being to improve the safety and quality of all medicine related processes affecting patients.

To achieve this, a hospital pharmacist must be able to operate in a complex hospital setting and work collaboratively within multi-disciplinary healthcare teams in order to provide the best treatment for patients in acute situations or receiving care in specialised ambulatories.

The basic education of 5 years for pharmacists as required by the European Directive on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications 2005/36/EC does not provide sufficient competencies to work independently in the hospital environment. Additional competencies are necessary to fully understand the processes in hospitals and to manage the specific requirements of certain patient groups (i.e. paediatrics, oncology, intensive care, rare diseases.) A comprehensive list of the competencies necessary to improve hospital pharmacy outcomes has been produced by EAHP with the support of the EU funded Pharmine project. (attachment or link to website).

EAHP believes that post graduate education in the hospital setting of at least 3, preferably 4 years with a final assessment of individual competency is essential to ensure that where pharmacists are providing front office hospital pharmacy services, patients benefit from the highest levels of expertise.

Many EU Member States have already formally recognised the need for specialisation in hospital pharmacy and the way in which this improves patient care. However, a lack of EU level mutual recognition of Hospital Pharmacy as structured specialisation creates substantial differences in the qualifications of pharmacists working in hospitals across Europe. It also undermines the efforts of certain European countries to advance the level of pharmaceutical care in the hospital setting and creates inequalities in patient access to the best possible care.

The review of the EU Directive on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications, provides an opportunity to address these issues. As an advocate of patient safety and in particular the safe and effective management of medication in hospitals, EAHP firmly asks that the European rules on professional mobility be updated to introduce Hospital Pharmacy as a mutually recognised speciality. This should be done in a way which is comparable to what has already been implemented for physicians under similar conditions. We believe that this is an essential step forward to ensure that all patients in acute situations benefit from pharmaceutical care that is underpinned by the highest levels of knowledge, skills, and experience.