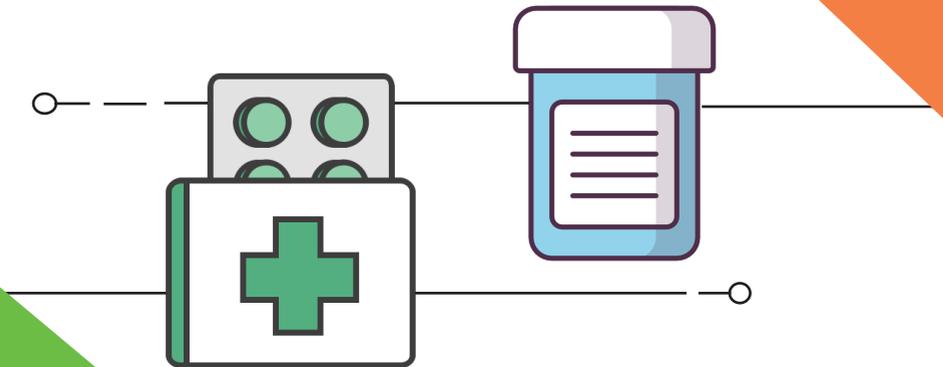


2018 EAHP Survey on Medicines Shortages

Industry



- Medicines shortages were reported to be a major issue facing hospitals across Europe.
- In terms of delivering the best care to patients and/or operating the hospital pharmacy, an overwhelming 90% of respondents answered 'Yes', providing strong evidence that shortages of medicines is an extremely common problem in hospitals today. 7% of respondents answered 'No', and 3% were unsure.
- Antimicrobial agents were the type of medicine most frequently reported as having shortage problems, with 77%.
- The most frequent response when asked how often does your hospital pharmacy experience medicines shortages was 'weekly' with 39% of the responses, followed by 'daily' (36%), 'monthly' (16%) and 'occasionally' (11%), which shows most hospitals are experiencing shortages on a frequent basis.

What impact medicines shortages had on patient care?



59% care delayed



31% cancellations of care



25% medication errors



25% suboptimal treatment



20% increased length of hospital stay



5% readmissions due to treatment failure



1% death

Hospital pharmacists' experience with shortages

When hospital pharmacists were asked to provide details about their own personal experiences with medication shortages, one theme that emerged in the responses was the lack of reliable or timely information from manufacturers and suppliers on the commencement or duration of shortages.

- *“Mostly there is **no information** provided from the manufacturer. It should be as soon as possible, in detail and continuously”. – Austria*
- *“The worst is, that pharmaceutical companies do not communicate; the orders are not delivered, and the **information mostly is only achieved by asking the supplier**.” – Germany*
- *“**We are not informed about shortages**, information from manufacturers is missing.” – Czech Republic*

There are some comments which suggest that the **more advanced notice** the hospital has on a shortage, they are **able to manage the situation better**, but sometimes notice of a shortage is not given and only found out about when products are not delivered.

- *“When there is sufficient or any notice they are easier to manage. Dealing with shortages when we get notice that the product is out of stock is much more challenging and reactive.” – Ireland*
- *“Not good. I found about shortage when wholesaler cannot deliver drugs when I order them.” – Croatia*
- *“Lack of information on availability from manufacturer and their wholesalers, lack of pre-warning of shortage resulting in panic buying, excess stock holding by some trusts. lots of time spent chasing orders, getting conflicting information, lots of time wasting trying to sort out what can be used as a replacement.” – UK*

Many respondents comment that information from companies about when stock will be back is unreliable. Some made suggestions that could help to solve the issue.

- *“Very often the companies announce a duration of the shortage which isn’t correct, so it goes longer and longer all the time. It would be **better in this case to describe the duration as unknown.**”* – Switzerland
- *“In most cases there is no data when the product will be delivered again (end of shortage). When a firm does have a delivery-date, you cannot always depend on it!”* – Belgium
- *“... Then there will be information on when the drug is expected to be delivered again - but this information is never to be trusted. That is in my opinion the biggest problem - because **we never know how to advise the hospital.**”* – Norway

Feedback on solutions

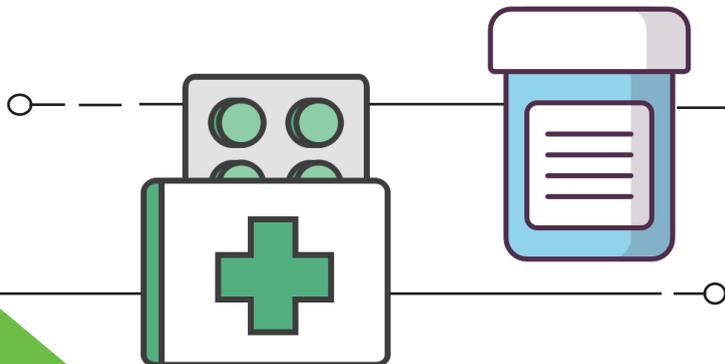
Freetext recommendations from respondents include mandatory reporting of shortages by manufacturers, as well as providing accurate information on return dates. Many respondents would like to see manufacturers have a legal obligation to maintain stock levels and ensure supply of medicines. Several comments highlight problems importing medicines from other countries, and the differences in price of the same medicine across Europe.

There are responses calling for a central lead/agency to work on the problem to reduce duplication of efforts in identifying alternatives (either at European, EU, or national level).

Identifying the root cause of shortages is also seen as important – *“A more holistic review needs to be undertaken to **understand why shortages occur and try and prevent them.** Currently most shortages are managed reactively instead of proactively.”*

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