



## **Joint Statement of the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP), the European Association of Senior Hospital Physicians (AEMH), the European Society of Clinical Pharmacy (ESCP) and the European Society of Oncology Pharmacy (ESOP) on the treatment of COVID-19 patients**

**27 April 2020**

Healthcare workers, including doctors, pharmacists and nurses, are attending daily to the needs of Europe's COVID-19 patients. Those patients requiring intubation also need to follow a concomitant therapy for which the use of anaesthetics, antibiotics and muscle relaxants is essential. Also, other supportive medicines needed in intensive care units, like resuscitation, respiratory and cardiac medicines, analgesics, medicines for thromboprophylaxis as well as medical nutrition and large volume parenterals are indispensable. The demand for these medicines has significantly increased in the past weeks, in particular in countries heavily affected by the pandemic.

In light of growing demand for certain types of medicines, issues linked to shortages have aggravated. In combination with transportation and export barriers between countries, lower production in Europe and supply problems for medicines and active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) sourced outside of Europe, treatment options are becoming more and more limited in certain regions. We consequently encourage European countries to adopt measures similar to those taken in France and the Netherlands, where stock levels for medicines needed for the treatment of COVID-19 patients are being monitored and allocated according to need by the national hospital pharmacy association/with the help of a dedicated application. Only knowledge about the situation can help safeguard the adequate distribution of stocks among hospitals in accordance with the number of patients they are serving.

We welcome the efforts that are being undertaken by our colleagues across Europe in search of a treatment for the coronavirus. Physicians and pharmacists, in general, shall follow the principles of evidence-based medicine. Therefore, we ask our colleagues to closely monitor and evaluate emerging clinical and research data to make use of evidence informed practices when weighing the risks and benefits for each individual case, in particular when using medications for an unapproved indication. Also, we urge those colleagues, that have the capacity, to participate in research activities to facilitate the generation and sharing of the much needed evidence for the optimisation of treatment for COVID-19 patients. Concerning the recourse to treatment options already licensed for indications other than the treatment of COVID-19 patients, we also would like to raise additional concerns. We call on our colleagues as well as on national governments and competent authorities to ensure that stockpiling and anticipatory orders for certain medicines used currently off label in COVID-19 patients do not affect the treatment of patients already taking these medications.

Given the need for European-wide collaboration, we appreciate the steps that are being taken by the EU authorities, in particular those that increase the involvement of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) to support the availability of medicines used in the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides letting EMA become a central coordinator, we would also like to encourage national governments and competent authorities to take the necessary measures that go beyond mere exchange which will guarantee the availability of essential medicines throughout the Union.

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The list of the organisations signing the statement:

- The **European Association for Senior Hospital Physicians** (AEMH) provides a European platform for hospital physicians, which develops and maintains a spirit of cooperation and communication among its national member delegations, improving the understanding of the different health systems. It encourages the exchange of ideas and experiences and promotes discussion among doctors, patients and politicians with the major objective of promoting health and improving patient safety. More information about AEMH is available under <https://www.aemh.org/> <sup>[2]</sup>
- The **European Association of Hospital Pharmacists** (EAHP) is a not-for-profit organisation that defends the interests of more than 23.000 European hospital pharmacists from its 35 member organisations. EAHP works to develop knowledge on hospital pharmacy to ease the improvement of care and outcomes for patients in the hospital setting. The Association achieves this through science, practice, research, education, as well as sharing best-practice and responsibility with other healthcare professionals. More information about EAHP is available under <https://www.eahp.eu/> <sup>[3]</sup>

- The **European Society of Clinical Pharmacy (ESCP)** is an international leader in advancing quality and innovation in clinical pharmacy education, practice and research. It is an organization that promotes, supports, implements and advances education, practice and research in clinical pharmacy in order to optimize outcomes for patients and society. More information about ESCP is available under <https://www.escpweb.org/> [4]
- The **European Society of Oncology Pharmacy (ESOP)**, founded in 2000 in Prague, is the largest organization of oncology pharmacists in the world with a membership of approx. 3.500 members from 62 countries. The aim of ESOP is to support optimal treatment for cancer patients. In order to achieve this aim, ESOP offers a high-quality further education, guidelines and ongoing development of practices in all parts of oncology pharmacy. More information about ESOP is available under <https://esop.li/> [5]

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#### Links

[1] <https://www.eahp.eu/contact/info/eahp/eu> [2] <https://www.aemh.org/> [3] <https://www.eahp.eu/> [4] <https://www.escpweb.org/> [5] <https://esop.li/>