



Patient safety lies at the heart of all representations made by

EAHP and its member associations. The importance of patient safety for hospital pharmacy practice has also been manifested in a dedicated section of the European Statements of Hospital Pharmacy [1]. As stewards of patients' medication safety, hospital pharmacists are the key stakeholders ensuring the safe, effective and rational use of medicines by upholding the "rights" of patients. This includes improving the safety of using medications, especially high-risk medication and look-alike and sound-alike medications, through their close surveillance as well as advising on the most appropriate use of medicines.

In October 2020, EAHP's member associations adopted a new position paper on patient safety specifically focusing on medication safety. In particular medication errors, which occur when a medicine has been inappropriately prescribed, prepared, dispensed or administered to a patient, are a key concern for hospital pharmacists.

In its position paper, EAHP

1. recommends a wider application of **different risk management tools**, including but not limited to single unit dose barcoding, risk management and quality control committees and computerised order entry systems in hospitals to lower medication errors for the benefits of patients.
2. advocates for the uptake of **closed loop medication management** to facilitate a faster and more accurate administration of medicines in hospitals.
3. recommends the implementation of **clinical pharmacy services** that can guarantee the medication appropriateness, reconciliation and the personalisation of therapies to further enhance the safety and the quality of the pharmaceutical care in Europe.
4. calls on **national governments and health system providers** to guarantee an adequate number of hospital pharmacists and the full utilisation of pharmacy services to improve concordance.
5. requests the strengthening of interprofessional collaboration and communication among healthcare personnel in all healthcare settings.
6. recommends the **universal application of infection prevention and control** measures by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) among healthcare professionals.

Read EAHP's Position Paper on Patient Safety [HERE](#) [2]

Conceptual framework of patient prioritisation & definition of pharmaceutical acuity

Limited healthcare resources, a rise in demand for services and the emergence of a global pandemic has meant that hospital pharmacy teams are seeking out ways to work more efficiently to maintain patient safety. One such approach is the use of prioritisation tools that direct the delivery of pharmacy services to patients who need them most.

Indeed, the European Statements of Hospital Pharmacy asserts that 'Hospital pharmacists should develop, in collaboration with other stakeholders, criteria and measurements to enable the prioritisation of hospital pharmacy activities'. However, although there are many tools or processes in use to support prioritisation, there is ambiguity and variation in terminology when describing this process.

The term 'patient acuity' is commonly used within nursing and other areas of healthcare to determine a patient's requirements for care and several definitions of this term exist. In pharmacy, the word acuity is sometimes used to describe a patient's need for pharmaceutical care; yet, it has not been defined nor explained.

Therefore, the University of Manchester and EAHP partners to develop This project that aims to develop a conceptual framework of patient prioritisation for pharmacy services and a definition of pharmaceutical acuity. This will provide a shared understanding both within the pharmacy profession and across the wider healthcare team as to the meaning and purpose of acuity in the context of pharmaceutical care as well as inform the future research agenda in this area.

The full report can be found [here](#) [3]

The agreed definition for Patient acuity was:

"Pharmaceutical acuity is an attribute of a patient, determined by an assessment of the likely requirement for pharmacy services, and used to direct and prioritise pharmacy workflow and workforce to ensure the right patient is seen by the right pharmacy professional at the right time - an approach that seeks to reduce medication-related problems and ensure person-centred care."

EAHP Opinion on Patient Information

Data holds power and is essential for many different reasons. Health data is particularly sensitive and thus subject to strict rules. Healthcare professionals who are bound by the obligation of medical secrecy provide an additional layer of protection. The digitalisation of healthcare is not only revolutionising treatment options but also impacting patient information which in the past has been defined as the health information contained in health records that is vital for the work of healthcare professionals, including hospital pharmacists. In a digitalised world, the scope of patient information is however growing. Their (health) data is no longer only stored in health records but is increasingly linked to apps or other digital tools.

Hospital pharmacists as frontline healthcare professionals are best placed to inform patients of the pitfalls that applications and barcodes hold. To ensure that they remain abreast of all the latest developments, **EHP calls on governments and health systems to give adequate support to healthcare professionals in keeping their digital health competencies up to date.** A specific focus should be put on the promotion of digital health literacy among healthcare professionals and patients.

In addition to safeguarding patient information contained in electronic health records, it must also be ensured that hospital pharmacists can access this information. Not only would this support the seamless transfer of patient care between healthcare settings, but it would also facilitate clinical services conducted by hospital pharmacists at admission, an inpatient period and discharge, like medicine reconciliation or medication therapy management. **EHP urges national authorities to provide access to health records of patients to hospital pharmacists.**

Read the EHP Opinion on Patient Information [HERE](#) [4].

Last update: 5 December 2023

Links

[1] <https://statements.eahp.eu/statements/european-statements-hospital-pharmacy> [2]

https://www.eahp.eu/sites/default/files/eahp_position_paper_on_patient_safety_october_2020.pdf [3]

https://www.eahp.eu/sites/default/files/congresses/pharmaceutical_acuity_report_final_v7_0.pdf [4]

https://www.eahp.eu/sites/default/files/eahp_opinion_on_patient_information.pdf