

The EAHP EU Monitor is a weekly round up of news relevant to hospital pharmacy in Europe.

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GOOD

PRACTICE

Initiatives



EAHP launch search for good practice initiatives

The European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP) has this week launched a search for examples of successful initiatives to improve hospital pharmacy practice from across Europe.

The exercise is part of a project led by the EAHP Scientific Committee to build an inventory map of good practice initiatives that can provide practical support and inspiration for hospital pharmacists in every country to embark on fresh improvement projects of their own, especially in an era of constrained budgets in the health service.

More information [here](#) [2].

European Observatory study states economic crisis is costing lives

A study led by the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies has set out evidence of the negative impacts on public health arising from the economic crisis.



Amongst the cited findings in the study, *Financial crisis, austerity, and health in Europe*, published in the Lancet, are:

- While the number of suicides in people under 65 had declined in Europe steadily until 2007, before the financial crisis, it then increased sharply. The study suggests this increase corresponds with the increase in unemployment and poverty;

- The Greek Ministry of Health has reported a 40 per cent rise in the suicide rate from January to May 2011 compared to the previous year;
- Mental illness in Spain increased significantly from 2006 to 2010, including anxiety, psychosomatic complaints and depression. The latter had recorded the largest increase;
- In Portugal, the death toll in the winter of 2012 in people over 75 increased by 10 percent over the previous year. More than 40 percent of pensioners living alone cannot adequately heat their homes due to social cuts;
- In Spain, Portugal and Greece, many health facilities have been closed, hospital beds reduced and patient contributions for drugs increased in recent years. In Portugal, for example, patient contributions for drugs have more than doubled; and,
- Infectious diseases such as malaria, West Nile and Dengue Fever, HIV infections among drug addicts, depression and suicide have risen sharply in Europe during the period of the current financial crisis.

Summary of report [here](#) [3].

Report [here](#) [4].

EMA seeks views on needs of the elderly in medicines quality and development

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) is seeking stakeholder views on the best ways to ensure the specific needs of the elderly are integrated during the development, approval and use of medicines, especially in relation to quality issues.

Unlike the paediatric case (regulation (EC) No 1901/2006), there is no specific legal requirement for the development of medicines for geriatric use. Yet EMA acknowledge a need for the pharmaceutical development of medicines to take into consideration that:

- elderly patients may face physical and cognitive impairment and hence they may have difficulties in taking their medicines e.g. swallowing tablets, opening packagings or reading the user instruction and patient information leaflet;
- older people may also more frequently require the assistance of caregivers than the overall adult population;
- physiological changes such as hepatic impairment, renal impairment or altered gastrointestinal motility may require a re-evaluation of the benefit/risk profile of the medicine and warrant adapted dosing regimens; and,
- polypharmacy may in itself cause adherence problems which may be partly overcome by the pharmaceutical design of the medicines used (e.g. a wider range of colours, sizes and tablet shapes is known to assist the recognition of medicines and hence to reduce errors)

The short concept paper, published on Friday 5th April 2013, marks the very early stages of the EMA's review processes on this subject and the consultation seeks initial views on

elements of the next steps such as: relevant scientific literature for analysis and gap analysis into the extent to which existing marketing authorizations may not fully meeting the needs of elderly patients.

It is intended that this review process *'should allow the identification of the quality aspects that are unique to medicines for older patients which are not addressed by the current guidelines or other regulatory provisions'*.

Formal drafting of a reflection paper is then due to commence in Q3 2013, to be finalized in Q3 2014 and external consultation in Q1/Q2 2015 and finalization by the end of that year.

Responses to the early concept paper are requested by **30th June 2013**.



EJHP: Breast cancer patient

adherence to hormonal treatment

The online first edition of the European Journal of Hospital Pharmacy recently published a research article investigating the rate of adherence to adjuvant hormonal treatment (AHT) by breast cancer patients that opt for hospital direct drug distribution.

The study found a poor level of adherence to AHT over 5 years of follow-up and early discontinuation and non-adherence to AHT were commonly associated with increased mortality.

Full article [here](#) [6].

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Links

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http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/doc_index.jsp?curl=pages/includes/document/document_detail.jsp?webContentId=V

[6] <http://ejhp.bmj.com/content/early/2013/03/14/ejhpharm-2012-000244.full>