



Position Paper on Digital Health

The roles of hospital pharmacists are changing and so is the environment they work in. Digitalisation is impacting a vast spectrum of healthcare services ranging from electronic prescribing, medical records and automation to text message prompts that remind patients to take their medicines and artificial intelligence revolutionising treatment. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the speed with which digitalisation to support healthcare delivery is introduced in hospitals, but there are still considerable gaps due to the lack of uniformity and interoperability across Europe.

The Position Paper focuses on (i) an urgent need for investments to improve the digital infrastructure in hospitals; (ii) the potential of digitalization for improving patient safety; (iii) facilitating patient empowerment and self-management while safeguarding patient information; (iv) the provision of appropriate training opportunities to healthcare professionals; and (v) the need to involve hospital pharmacists in hospital information and communication technology (ICT) design and specification.

National governments and health systems across Europe should work towards adequately making provisions for hospital pharmacists and the patients they serve for the digital future of healthcare.

Consequently, EAHP

- strongly encourages national governments and hospital administrations together with the European institutions to take all necessary steps to assure a uniform informatic structure for health data and clear standards for the interoperability of information technology systems used in healthcare.
- calls on the European Commission and Member States to establish funding programmes that support hospitals with updating their digital infrastructure.
- urges the European Commission and national governments to advance the systematic and EU- wide achievement of electronic prescribing, decision support systems, administration and the use of electronic health records by hospital pharmacists and

other healthcare professionals in order to enable closed-loop medication management.

- recommends the use of patient-related logistic systems and adding requirements for barcoding of medicines to the single units in primary packages to enable universal use of bedside scanning in European hospitals, thus improving patient safety.
- advocates for the complementary use of paper and electronic patient information leaflets where access of patients to this information cannot be ensured otherwise.
recommends raising awareness among users and appropriate regulatory oversight mechanisms for digital health applications to ensure that they have a positive impact and adequately protect patient data.
- urges education providers to make available appropriate training opportunities to healthcare professionals and students that focus on both boosting their digital skills and promoting digital health literacy among patients and healthcare professionals.
- calls on decision-makers at both the national and the European levels to ensure the involvement of hospital pharmacists in the design, development and specification of parameters as well as the evaluation and maintenance of ICT within the medicines processes.

Have a look at the Position Paper on Digital Health [HERE](#) ^[1]

EAHP involvement in the Integrating Healthcare Enterprise (IHE)

The Integrating Healthcare Enterprise ^[2] (IHE) is an initiative led by healthcare professionals and industry to improve the way computer systems in the health system share information. By doing so, systems developed in accordance with IHE communicate better among themselves, are easier to implement, and enable healthcare providers to use information more effectively.

IHE's vision ^[3] lies in enabling seamless and secure access to health information that is usable whenever and wherever needed. It improves healthcare by providing specifications, tools, and services for interoperability. IHE further engages clinicians, health authorities, industry, and users to develop, test, and implement standards-based solutions to vital health information needs. Information Technologies, interoperability, eHealth and mHealth are core elements of the European Commission Digital Agenda. These technologies are already dramatically changing hospital pharmacies and hospital pharmacists not only in Europe but around the world.

EAHP is part of the IHE Pharmacy (PHARM) ^[4] that addresses information sharing, workflow, and patient care in both hospital and community pharmacies. This Pharmacy domain started in 2009, supported by EAHP, the Dutch National IT Institute for Healthcare (NICTIZ) ^[5] and Phast ^[6].

Amongst the current work in this domain, there is improving information exchange between healthcare providers and organisations that depend on pharmacy-related workflows and processes and developing ways to automate collaborative workflow between physicians and pharmacists in both community and hospital pharmacy environments. The themes for the next years are linked to hospital pharmacy workflows, medication documentation and hospital supply chain.

Further information could be accessed on the following links:

- IHE International [2] (an initiative by healthcare professionals and industry to improve the way computer systems in healthcare share information)
- IHE Europe [7] (it is a non-profit organization that promotes the IHE concepts in Europe, it is a regional deployment committee member of IHE International and serves as umbrella organization for the National Deployment Committee, user organization and vendor members in Europe)

IHE thematic information on Pharmacy:

- IHE Technical Framework – Pharmacy Archives [8] (it has the current published IHE Pharmacy Documents)
- IHE Supply Workgroup [9] (it is defining common mechanisms to support the supply of health products in different domains and different workflows)
- White Paper – Hospital and Community Pharmacy | Use Cases and Standards [10] (its purpose lies in identifying the critical interoperability needs in the Pharmacy domain, describing the corresponding interoperability Use Cases and proposing a set of communication standards to implement these Use Cases)
- White Paper Supply of Products for Healthcare [11] (it addresses a rising interoperability need – the interaction between the supply processes and the clinical processes, and what interoperability is possible and desired to support such processes).

Thematic information on:

- Pharmacy [12] (it addresses information sharing, workflow and patient care in both hospital and community pharmacy settings)
- Hospital Medication Workflow [13] (it covers the message-based workflow related to medication prescriptions inside a healthcare institution)
- Mobile Medication Administration [14] (it defines the integration between healthcare systems and mobile – or any other – clients using RESTful web services. It allows connecting Electronic Health Records (EHRs) with smartphones, smart pill boxes, and other personal or professional devices).

Last update: 25 August 2023

Links

[1] https://www.eahp.eu/sites/default/files/position_paper_on_digital_health_june_2023.pdf [2] <https://www.ihe.net/> [3] <https://www.ihe.net/wp-content/uploads/IHE-Strategic-Plan-2022.pdf> [4] https://www.ihe.net/ihe_domains/pharmacy/ [5] <https://nictiz.nl/page/Home/English> [6] <https://www.phast.fr/> [7] <https://www.ihe-europe.net/> [8] https://www.ihe.net/resources/technical_frameworks/technical_framework_archives/#pharmacy [9] https://wiki.ihe.net/index.php?title=IHE_Supply_Workgroup [10] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ANluX11cCXPQ6932_ykvcHomugADH2mO/view [11] https://www.ihe.net/uploadedFiles/Documents/Pharmacy/IHE_Pharmacy_WP_Supply.pdf [12] <https://wiki.ihe.net/index.php?title=Pharmacy> [13] https://wiki.ihe.net/index.php/Hospital_Medication_Workflow [14] https://wiki.ihe.net/index.php/Mobile_Medication_Administration