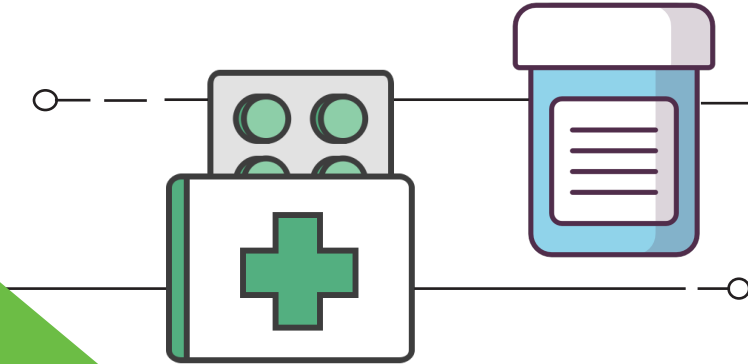


# 2018 EAHP Survey on Medicines Shortages

## Patients



- Medicines shortages were reported to be a major issue faced in hospitals across Europe.
- 90% of respondents stated that medicines shortages are a current problem in the hospital in terms of delivering the best care to patients and/or operating the hospital pharmacy.
- 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%).
- Antimicrobial agents were the type of medicine most frequently reported as having shortage problems, with 77%, followed by preventative medicines (vaccinations) (43%) and oncology medicines (39%).

## 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

## How medicines shortages are managed

When a medicine is in short supply a **hospital pharmacist will try to ensure the treatment of a patient is not adversely affected**. The hospital may have sufficient supplies of a medicine to last through the shortage, or if the pharmacist is informed of a potential shortage, they may try to stockpile the medicine.

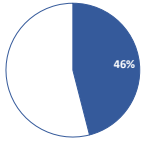
- *“When a future discontinuation is notified we will remind the prescribers of the impending situation and we will also try to increase stock holding to defer the eventual shortage.”* – Ireland

If a medicine is not available from a supplier, they **may look to find an alternate supplier or source of the medicine, possibly from abroad**. This may include different brands of the same medicine. In some cases this is not possible and either the pharmacist or the prescriber may recommend that an alternative medicine be used instead.

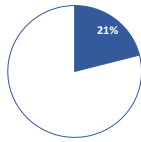
- *“In the shortage, I have to change the brand and, in many cases, to recommend the use of other drugs.”* – Spain
- *“At first we try to find drugs with the same active ingredient and use generics if possible. If that is not possible we try to find alternatives with our medical doctors.”* – Germany

Although medicines shortages is a major issue, hospital pharmacists spend a lot of time and resources into ensuring patient care is not affected: *“Patient care hasn’t been affected because of the massive resource we have put in place to manage these shortages.”*

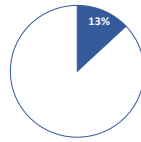
## Amount of time spent dealing with medicines shortages



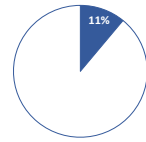
'up to 5 hours'



'up to 10 hours'

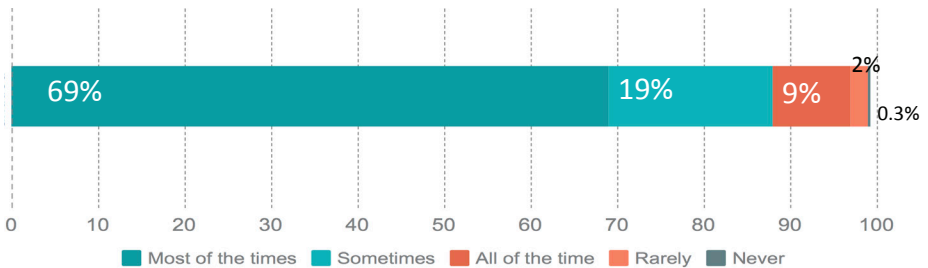


'more than 15 hours'



'less than 1 hour'

## How often do you estimate your hospital is able to provide treatment to a patient by providing a therapeutic equivalent or near equivalent medicine, without major disruption to their treatment in the case of a medicine in short supply?

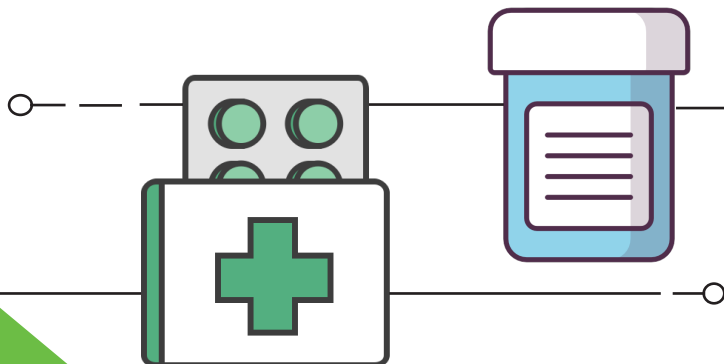


## Feedback on solutions

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 to have a legal obligation to maintain stock levels and ensure supply of medicines. Several comments highlight problems when 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.”*

# 2018 EAHP Survey on Medicines Shortages Patients



European Association of  
Hospital Pharmacists

Boulevard Brand Whitlock 87  
Box 11 (4th floor) 1200 Brussels

