

Immunization: The role of pharmacists worldwide

10/04/2018

Health care professionals from 20 countries around the world gathered in Venice from 14 to 16 March to discuss “Pharmacy-based interventions to increase vaccine uptake” following an invitation from the EICA –European Interdisciplinary Council on Ageing. Community pharmacists from more than 10 countries representing various levels of implementation were purposively chosen to enrich the debate with other stakeholders. In addition to the great scientific presentations that included an evidence-based review of the most recent immunization research, the participants were given the opportunity to exchange best practice experiences and discuss opportunities for further expansion in pharmacist field globally.

The evidence has clearly shown that in those countries where pharmacists have vaccination administration authority; like Canada, USA, UK, Ireland and Portugal, immunization coverage rates are higher than in countries lacking this scope. Pharmacists from Estonia, Croatia, Spain, Malta and others are going to share the above positive examples in their home countries, to make vaccination more accessible for people. Those countries that have low immunization rates would definitely benefit from an additional participation by pharmacists. The public health perspective was emphasized by those involved. Examples of countries where only 2% of the population are immunized for influenza were considered at high risk of an epidemic outbreak. Greece was an example of an interesting situation where 90% of the flu shots are administered by pharmacist, while the law has yet to recognize this expanded authority. This situation arose because it is widely recognized that the pharmacist is the most accessible healthcare professional, often located in rural areas and available without an appointment.

Part of the meeting focused on discussing the barriers and facilitators for vaccine uptake and pharmacists seemed willing and capable to cooperate with other health care professionals so that W.H.O. targets are achieved. Support from representative organisations, both at the National and international level, including the FIP(International Pharmaceutical Federation) and PGEU(Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union), was recognised as an important facilitator to raise public awareness, to provide education and training and to facilitate a positive legislative environment. Immunization is an important public health issue and pharmacists can have a dramatic impact if allowed to participate in administration programs.



The pharmacists:

Ana Soldo, President of the Croatian Chamber of Pharmacists

Ashok Soni, President of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, England

Elissavet Derveniotaki, President of the Kozani Association of Pharmacists, Greece

Filipa Alves de Costa, Consultant for Professional Strategic Planning at the Portuguese Pharmaceutical Society

Goncalo Sousa Pinto, Professional Development and Advocacy Manager at the International Pharmaceutical Federation

Indre Treciokiene, board member of Lithuanian Pharmaceutical Association, Head of Community Pharmacy Section.

John Papastergiou, Assistant Professor at the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy- University of Toronto, Adjunct Assistant Professor at the School of Pharmacy- University of Waterloo

Kristiina Sepp, Vice President of the Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union, board member of the Estonian Pharmacies Association

Mary Ann Sant Fournier, President of the Malta Chamber of Pharmacists

Rosario Caceres, Projects Development and Institutional Relations Manager at the Royal Pharmaceutical College of Seville, Spain

Rute Horta, Coordinator of the Pharmacy Services Department, Portuguese National Association of Pharmacies

Susan O'Dwyer, MPSI, Community Pharmacist, Ireland

[\[más información\]](#)

[\[más información\]](#)