

PRESS RELEASE

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PGEU Medicine Shortages Survey Results

The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU) is the European association representing more than 400,000 community pharmacists.

PGEU's members are the national associations and professional bodies of pharmacists in 32 European countries, including EU Member States, EEA/EFTA members and EU applicant countries.

For more information, please visit the PGEU website www.pgeu.eu or contact pharmacy@pgeu.eu



Each year PGEU conducts a survey among its membership to map the impact of medicine shortages across Europe from the community pharmacists' perspective. The [2019 PGEU Medicine Shortages Survey Results](#) cover the responses from 24 European countries.

Main findings of the survey:

1. All responding countries experienced medicine shortages in community pharmacies in the past 12 months, and the vast majority (87%) of respondents indicated that the situation got worse compared to 2018.
2. All classes of medicines are affected by medicine shortages in community pharmacies.
3. In the majority of responding countries (67%), over 200 medicines were listed as in short supply at the time of completing the survey.
4. All responding countries indicated that they believe medicine shortages cause distress and inconvenience to patients. Interruption of treatments (75% of countries), increased co-payments as a result of more expensive/non-reimbursed alternatives (58%) and suboptimal treatment/inferior efficacy (42%) are also perceived as negative consequences of medicine shortages on patients.
5. Medicine shortages are believed to affect community pharmacy businesses in most countries by reduced patient trust (92% of countries), financial loss due to time invested in mitigating shortages (82%) and reduced employee satisfaction (79%).
6. Across European countries, strong differences exist in terms of legal solutions community pharmacists can offer in case of a shortage. Generic substitution (79 % of countries), sourcing the same medicine from alternative authorised sources (such as other pharmacies) (63%), and importing the medicine from a country where it is available (46%) are the solutions which can be provided in most of the European countries.
7. The time pharmacy staff has to spent on dealing with medicine shortages has increased from 5,6 hours per week (2018) to 6,6 hours per week on average.
8. 25% of responding countries indicated that there is still no reporting system for shortages in place which can be used by community pharmacists in their country, despite that pharmacists often experience or foresee supply difficulties before the industry or wholesalers are aware that there is, or will be, a problem.
9. Community pharmacists receive the needed information on shortages in most countries from wholesalers (71%), medicines agencies (67%) and pharmacy organisations (42%).

PGEU President Duarte Santos commented *"The 2019 results highlight the high incidence, the ongoing rise of the number of medicine shortages in most European countries and their daily and burdensome impact on patients and pharmacy practice across Europe. They also point to the existing gap in needed information, tools and legal options available to community pharmacists in many European countries for providing solutions to patients in case of a shortage. We strongly recommend policymakers and stakeholders to take note of these striking trends and act upon them accordingly because the situation for patients and healthcare providers across Europe is no longer bearable and acceptable."*