



PGEU GPUE

Pharmaceutical Group of European Union
Groupement Pharmaceutique de l'Union Européenne

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PRESS RELEASE

PGEU Medicine Shortages Survey 2020 Results

Each year PGEU conducts a survey among its membership to map the impact of medicine shortages across Europe from the community pharmacists' perspective. The [2020 PGEU Medicine Shortages Survey Results](#) cover the responses from 26 European countries.

Main findings of the survey:

1. All responding countries experienced medicine shortages in community pharmacies in the past 12 months, and in the majority (65%) of countries, respondents indicated that the situation got worse compared to 2019.
2. All classes of medicines are affected by medicine shortages in community pharmacies across Europe. Cardiovascular medications have been short in supply in community pharmacies in the highest percentage of countries (92%).
3. In the majority of responding countries (65%), over 200 medicines were listed as in short supply at the time of completing the survey.
4. Almost all responding countries indicated that they believe medicine shortages cause distress and inconvenience to patients (96%). Interruption of treatments (80% of countries) and increased co-payments as a result of more expensive/non-reimbursed alternatives (57%) are also perceived as common negative consequences of medicine shortages on patients.
5. Medicine shortages affect community pharmacy businesses in most countries by financial loss due to the time invested in mitigating shortages (92% of countries), reduced patient trust (80%) and reduced employee satisfaction (76%).
6. Across Europe, strong differences exist in terms of legal solutions community pharmacists can offer in case of a shortage. Generic substitution (80% of countries), importing the medicine from a country where it is available (50%) and sourcing the same medicine from alternative authorised sources, such as other pharmacies, (46%) are the solutions which can be provided in most of the European countries. However, some of these solutions are subject to restrictions (e.g. new prescription is needed) and can be cumbersome and time-consuming for the patient and the pharmacist.
7. The time pharmacy staff has to spend on dealing with medicine shortages is 6,3 hours per week on average.
8. 23% 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 relevant information on shortages mostly from medicine agencies (65%), manufacturers (57%) and wholesalers (50%).

PGEU President Alain Delgutte commented *"The 2020 results show the continued high incidence of medicine shortages in Europe and their daily and burdensome impact on patients and pharmacy practice. The COVID-19 pandemic has made the general public aware of the vulnerability of supply chains for medicines and medical equipment, a structural issue pharmacies have been faced with for over a decade already. Community pharmacists have been doing everything in their power to prevent further worsening of shortages and have in several European countries also been successfully empowered in this role by their authorities. We sincerely hope that the increased attention of policy makers to this phenomenon will allow us to report more positive progress in the coming years and finally bring meaningful solutions to patients and healthcare professionals across Europe."*