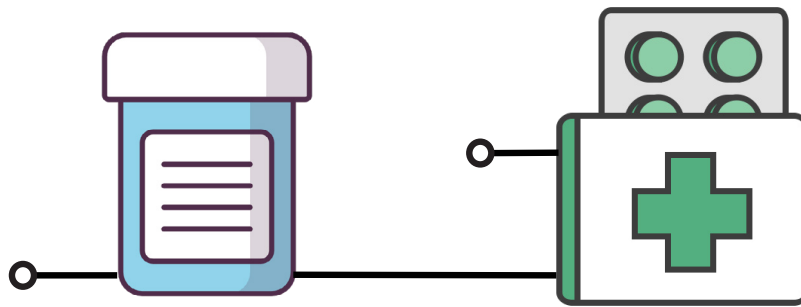


2018 EAHP Survey on Medicines Shortages



MEDICINES SHORTAGES IN FRENCH HOSPITALS



- 97% of hospital pharmacists are currently experiencing problems with medicines shortages.
- 89% of hospital pharmacists report that medicines shortages are a daily, sometimes weekly, occurrence.
- 86% of hospital pharmacists agreed, or strongly agreed, that medicines shortages in their hospital are having a negative impact on patient care.

With medicines shortages becoming a growing issue in the pharmaceutical world year after year, the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP) continued its “Medicines Shortages Survey” in 2018 in order to renew the available evidence on the medicines shortage situation in European hospitals. The survey covered 38 countries and amassed a total number of 1,666 responses and 192 responses were obtained from French hospital pharmacists, with an increase of 189 individuals compared to the 2014 EAHP Medicines Shortages Survey, when three responses were received from France.

97% of French respondents are currently experiencing problems with medicines shortages

When asked if the shortage of medicines is a current problem in the hospital, especially in terms of delivering the best care for patients, 97% of French respondents participating in the survey answered with “yes”.

** The numbers in this country report relate to the French hospital pharmacists that participated in the 2018 EAHP Medicines Shortage Survey.*

*** The country report uses original quotes provided by survey respondents during the consultation period. These quotes have not been altered.*



In which area of medicines do French hospitals experience shortages most commonly?



91% antimicrobial agents



72% preventative medicines



48% oncology medicines



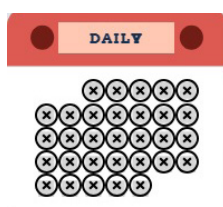
47% anaesthetic agents



44% cardiovascular medicines

89% of French respondents report that medicines shortages are a daily, sometimes weekly, occurrence

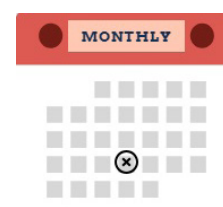
It is important to assess the occurrence of shortages in a timely manner in order to know if shortages for specific medicines come in waves or if they usually manifest themselves in the hospitals. When asked how often their hospital pharmacies experienced shortages of medicines, 50% (N=96) of respondents replied with “daily”, while 39% (N=75) experienced medicines shortages on a “weekly” basis. In 8% (N=16) of French hospital pharmacies shortages are a monthly occurrence. When a shortage is detected, hospital pharmacists work on overcoming it as soon as possible, although the timeframe depends on the nature of the shortage. In France, shortages usually last for a number of weeks, but sometimes they may linger for several months.



50% of French hospital pharmacists are affected by shortages on a daily basis



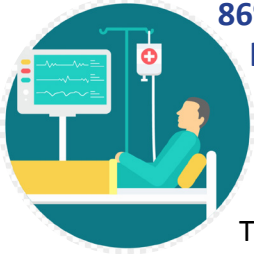
39% of French hospital pharmacists are affected by shortages on a weekly basis



8% of French hospital pharmacists are affected by shortages on a monthly basis

In order to find out the answers to questions on the availability of shortage information in France, respondents were asked if they are aware of a reporting system for shortages being in place at the national level. Those who replied positively were encouraged to provide further feedback on the functionality of the system. The respondents pointed out that there is a system where French hospital pharmacists can submit information on shortages, but 53% (N=39) believe that this system is not effective. The National Agency for the Safety of Medicines and Health Products is the entity responsible for shortage reporting in France (<https://ansm.sante.fr>). In addition, hospital pharmacists have the possibility to report shortages through the National Chamber of Pharmacy. The following free text comments were shared by French respondents on the functionality of the reporting system:

- “Sometimes, we obtain information partially, no alternative solutions are proposed, the problems are always the same: no meds “
- “We get the information of a shortage by e-mail but this does not include all the shortages (for example no information about buspirone shortage). You get the information but it seems that nothing is done to reduce the shortages”



86% of respondents agreed, or strongly agreed, that medicines shortages in their hospital are having a negative impact on patient care

In the hospital environment, medicines shortages affect patient care on different levels. The survey took into consideration **budget** and **time**. Results show that, due to shortages, hospital staff is diverted from their usual tasks for up to 5 hours (44% | N=40) or even up to 10 hours (23% | N=21) in an average working week. In the worst-case scenario, hospital pharmacy staff must compensate the time lost due to medicines shortages with more than 15 hours per week (14% | N=13). Furthermore, 73% (N=66) of respondents in France agree, or strongly agree, that medicines shortages have a negative impact on the overall hospital budget.

In regard to the steps taken to minimise the negative impact on patient care in France, the survey results showed that in 90% (N=79) of the cases, hospital pharmacists informed the prescriber about the shortage and recommended an alternative medicine. Other actions included informing the prescriber of a shortage (70% | N=62), investigating when the supply will be restored and planning accordingly (63% | N=55) or substituting the medicine without consulting the prescriber (47% | N=41).

Action from European and national entities is needed to combat the growing threat of medicines shortages and its impact on patient care

When presented with already existing solutions at the European level, almost a third of the respondents were in favour of the initiatives taken by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), the Heads of Medicines Agency* and the activities of COST Action CA 15105**. The remaining 71% (N=59) of French respondents chose “none of the above” when asked which policy solution they personally supported. This particular answer may indicate individuals who do not support any of the proposed policies, but also those who might not be aware that these policies exist or what they entail. Consequently, there is a clear need to improve communication on European and national policy responses and strategies vis-à-vis medicines shortages. 77% (N=64) would personally support greater legal clarity on the need to oblige manufacturers to report a forthcoming disruption of supply, while 59% (N=49) requested a more comprehensive database, run by the EMA, listing all medicines shortages together with advice on the shortages timeframe and available replacement therapies. Moreover, a high-level investigation, led by the European Commission, to determine the causes of medicine shortages in Europe (e.g. production issues, pricing impact and parallel trade) and their impact on both patient care and healthcare delivery would be supported by 58% (N=48) of French respondents. Lastly, 42% (N=35) favour an annual reporting system providing information on the extent of medicines shortages within Europe.

The following comments were received from respondents in relation to policy options on both national and European level:

- *“I beg for more effectiveness, more often in our countries, we have to deal with shortages far before authorities are aware of it”*
- *“While authorizing medicine by EMA, it must be an obligation for the supplier to have always supplies on the drug or having a ticket if they have medicine shortage. Because often, medicine shortage are the result of a medicine that is no more profitable for the lab”*

*Further information on EMA/HMA task force is provided here: <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/partners-networks/eu-partners/eu-member-states/heads-medicines-agencies>

**More on COST Action CA 15105 can be found here: http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/ca/CA15105