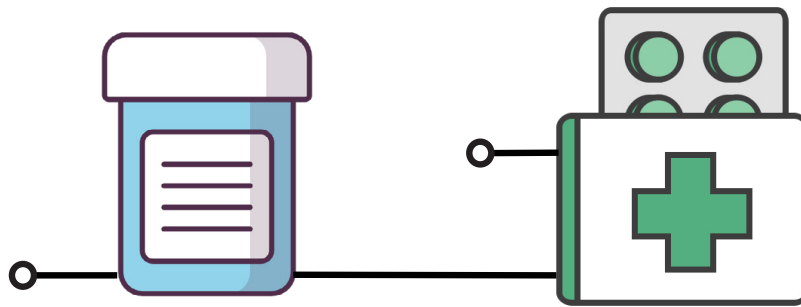
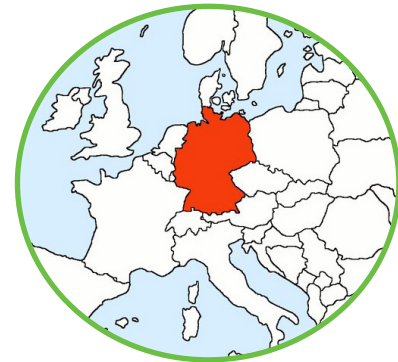


2018 EAHP Survey on Medicines Shortages



MEDICINES SHORTAGES IN GERMAN HOSPITALS



- 100% of hospital pharmacists are currently experiencing problems with medicines shortages.
- 97% of hospital pharmacists report that medicines shortages are a daily, sometimes weekly, occurrence.
- 78% 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 78 responses were obtained from German hospital pharmacists, with an increase of 68 individuals compared to the 2014 EAHP Medicines Shortages Survey, when 10 responses were received from Germany.

100% of hospital pharmacists report 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, 100% of German respondents participating in the survey answered with “yes”.

** The numbers in this country report relate to the German 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 German hospitals experience shortages most commonly?



91% antimicrobial agents



69% anaesthetic agents



57% oncology medicines

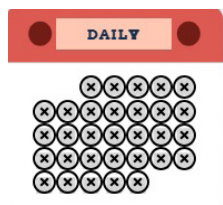


54% preventative medicines

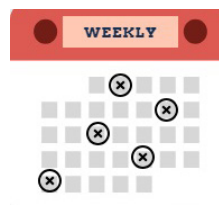


47% preventative medicines

97% of hospital pharmacists report that medicines shortages are a daily, sometimes weekly, occurrence



55% of German hospital pharmacists are affected by shortages on a daily basis



42% of German hospital pharmacists are affected by shortages on a weekly basis

It is important to assess the occurrence of shortages in a timely manner in order to know if shortages for a 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, 55% (N=43) of respondents replied with “daily”, while 42% (N=33) experienced medicines shortages on a “weekly” basis. 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 Germany, shortages usually last for a number of weeks, according to the data collected by the EAHP Medicines Shortages Survey.

In order to find out the answers to questions on the available information vis-à-vis shortages in Germany, respondents were asked if they are aware of a reporting system for shortages being in place at the national level. Those who responded positively were encouraged to provide further feedback on the functionality of the system. The respondents pointed out that there is a system where German hospital pharmacists can submit information on shortages, but 92% (N=45) believe this system is not effective.

The Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices is the entity responsible for shortage reporting in Germany (www.bfarm.de). The following free text comments were shared by German hospital pharmacists on the functionality of the reporting system:

“It does not work, as the entries are voluntary, and, in our experience, they are either not listed/listed too late or listed with insufficient information “

- *“The companies report shortages to different institutions which list them on the internet. The list is often not up-to date, and not all shortages are listed here because it is not mandatory and there are different limitations (just shortages > 2 weeks etc.)”*
- *“There is no obligation to report a shortage - therefore not all shortages are reported.”*



78% 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 has taken into consideration **budget** and **time**. Results show that, due to shortages, hospital staff is diverted from their usual tasks for up to 5 hours (40% | N=22) or even up to 10 hours (29% | N=16) in an average working week. Moreover, 31% (N=17) report having to reallocate staff for up to, or even more than 15 hours per week. Furthermore, 82% (N=45) of German respondents 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 Germany, the survey results showed that in 89% (N=47) of the cases, hospital pharmacists informed the prescriber about the shortage and recommended an alternative medicine. Other actions included getting the medicine from a different supplier (77% | N=41), informing the prescriber of a shortage (62% | N=33) or investigating when the supply will be restored and planning accordingly (57% | N=30).

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 European level, 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 68% (N=36) of German 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. 85% (N=45) would personally support a greater legal clarity on the need to oblige manufacturers to report a forthcoming disruption of supply, while 60% (N=32) were in favour of a high-level investigation, led by the European Commission, to determine the causes of medicines shortages in Europe (e.g. production issues, pricing impact and parallel trade) and their impact on patient care and healthcare delivery. Another policy option, favoured by 58% (N=31), pointed towards a more comprehensive database, run by the EMA, listing all medicines shortages linked with advice on how long the shortage may last and available replacement therapies. Lastly, 47% (N=25) 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:

- *“Please keep the topic in focus! It’s a huge problem. I think we also need to keep in mind that one of the causes for shortages is social attitude that everything has to be cheap (leading to limited stocks in companies and no opportunity to bridge shortages).”*
- *“Pharmaceutical companies should be obliged to have a sufficient stock of their products. Emergency medicines that are not supplied by pharmaceutical companies should be produced by government agencies, e.g. diphtheria antitoxin, snake venom antitoxin.”*
- *“The governments should have more legal handle to obligate companies to increase their stock in the countries of delivering. I miss the serious care of the governments about this problem”*

*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

