

# Coordination of Medication Shortage Management within the Pharmacy Service and Across Healthcare Levels

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## Why was done

The problems caused by medication shortages are significant, pose a risk to patient care, and require good coordination between different levels of the healthcare system (primary care and hospital pharmacy services (PS)). Drug shortages can adversely affect drug therapy, compromise or delay medical procedures, and result in medication errors.

The **OBJECTIVES** of the working group are to define the internal processes of the PS regarding the management of and communication between professionals about medication supply shortages and to coordinate the referral of primary care community patients for dispensing at the hospital.



## What was done

A multidisciplinary working group was established, including representatives from various pharmacy areas (management, outpatient dispensing, drug information center, pediatrics) and representatives from the Primary Care Medication Management Area in our Health Region, where our center serves as the reference hospital.

The *Supplier Shortage Working Instruction* has been updated, and a pathway has been established for referring patients from primary care to the outpatient pharmacies (adult and pediatric) of our hospital.

## How it was done

Internal meetings of the PS were held to update the *Supplier Shortage Working Instruction*, considering the different situations of medications in shortage (exclusive and/or non-substitutable, substitutable, and community pharmacy medications in shortage).

A meeting with Primary Care representatives was conducted to define the pathway for referring community patients with medications in shortage imported from abroad through the Spanish Agency of Medicines and Medical Devices.



## What was achieved

The internal working instruction has been redefined, and a shared resource for the entire PS (dynamic table) has been created to centralize relevant information for the management of medications in shortage, which is kept up-to-date.

A referral pathway has been established for Primary Care patients to the outpatient pharmacies of our hospital. Two pharmacists from the PS coordinate shortage information with Primary Care. Primary Care reports the number of patients with active prescriptions requiring medication, which ensures adequate stock levels and enables patient scheduling to enhance their experience (schedule with time slots dedicated to shortage-related dispensing).



## What is next

- Having an internal pathway has improved the management of medication shortages in the PS, as well as enabled the coordinated referral of community patients.
- It is applicable to all PS involved in dispensing foreign medications due to shortages.

