

Factsheet: the Council of Europe and pharmaceutical care

The Council of Europe Resolution CM/Res(2020)3 on implementation of pharmaceutical care for the benefit of patients and health services

The pharmaceutical care resolution aims to ensure the implementation of pharmaceutical care, with a view to promoting patient-centred care and advancing appropriate and safe use of medications in Europe.

Medication is a routine part of healthcare systems around the world. The primary aim of all healthcare professionals involved in the medication process should be to improve patients' quality of life. Sometimes, however, the potential benefits of medications are not fully realised (e.g. due to lack of medication adherence) or, even worse, inappropriate use of medicines can lead to increased morbidity or even mortality. Pharmaceutical care addresses the medication needs of patients directly and comprehensively and, in doing so, contributes to the overall efforts of healthcare professionals in providing patient-centred care which optimises medication use.

What is pharmaceutical care?

Pharmaceutical care is a quality concept and working method for the responsible provision of drug therapy, with the purpose of achieving definite outcomes that improve patients' quality of life. Pharmaceutical care involves the process through which a pharmacist co-operates with patients and other healthcare professionals in designing, implementing and monitoring therapeutic plans that will produce specific therapeutic outcomes for the patient.¹

Pharmaceutical care should be envisaged as an addition to the existing roles of pharmacists, such as supply-chain management and the provision of medication, including dispensing and quality assurance.

The added value of the resolution: better care and efficient use of medicines

The resolution is part of the efforts of the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines & HealthCare (EDQM, Council of Europe) to contribute to the basic human right of access to good quality medicines and healthcare in Europe. It provides health authorities, professional bodies and healthcare professionals across Europe with a legal basis for the implementation of a pharmaceutical care philosophy and working methods in daily practice.

The implementation of the resolution's provisions is expected to enhance patient-centred care and ensure access to safe and good quality healthcare in Europe. As the resolution plays a crucial role in the promotion of the safety and quality of medication use, its implementation in national healthcare systems could help achieve the benefits of responsible use of medicines, promote rational use of healthcare resources and reduce inequalities in healthcare.

1. Hepler C. D. and Strand L. M. (1990), "Opportunities and Responsibilities in Pharmaceutical Care". *Am. J. Hosp. Pharm.*, 47: 533-543

Content of the resolution

The resolution consists of the following seven sections:

1. Definition of pharmaceutical care (Section I)
2. Patient care and the pharmaceutical care process (Section II)
3. Pharmaceutical care and related pharmacy services (Section III)
4. Services provided in the hospital setting (Section IV)
5. Services specific to public health and population health (Section V)
6. Implementation of pharmaceutical care within the health system (Section VI)
7. Promotion of pharmaceutical care (Section VII)

Who drafted this resolution?

The activities of the EDQM in the field of pharmaceutical care are overseen by the European Committee on Pharmaceuticals and Pharmaceutical Care (CD-P-PH) of the Council of Europe (intergovernmental committee) and carried out with the support of one of its subcommittees, the Committee of Experts on Quality and Safety Standards in Pharmaceutical Practices and Care (CD-P-PH/PC). The latter is entrusted with improving pharmaceutical care and practices in ambulatory and hospital settings through specific programmes and policies.

The activities related to the drafting of the pharmaceutical care resolution were carried out with the support of the Pharmaceutical Care Resolution Working Party, which was established in 2016 and consists of hospital and community pharmacists, academics and representatives of national competent authorities.