



Pharmacy: transforming outcomes

In this article, Pamela Logan, Director of Pharmacy Services, IPU, gives an overview of the recent FIP conference.

The 78th Annual World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences was held in Glasgow on 2 – 6 September 2018. The Congress was hosted by the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), in collaboration with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS), and saw 3,014 people registered from 108 countries.

FIP is the global federation of national associations of pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists, and is a non-governmental organisation in official relations with the World Health Organisation. With 144 member organisations, FIP represents over four million experts in medicines, supporting the responsible use of medicines around the world.





Carmen Pena, Outgoing FIP President and Catherine Duggan, FIP CEO



FIP President's opening address

Sustainability is an area that needs immediate action by pharmacists, Dr Carmen Peña, President of FIP, said at the opening ceremony. FIP's future vision and mission requires a series of sustainability goals to be set, with regard to access to and responsible use of medicines, viability of the pharmacy profession and environmental considerations. She added that, as the profession closest to patients, and to people in general, pharmacists have a great opportunity to help meet the United Nations Sustainable Development

Goals, in terms of health and social well-being. Sustainability is the third of three focus areas in Dr Peña's "Two times two plan" for pharmacy, which she described at the start of her Presidency in 2014.

Dr Peña said that access to medicines remains a distant goal in many parts of the world, and this lack of access can have devastating consequences, such as the real and growing threat of falsified and counterfeit medicines. "The greatest guarantee of sustainability, in access to and responsible

use of medicines, resides in policies that lay down global, national and regional regulations which ensure that the whole medicines chain, from research to destruction, is supervised and safeguarded by pharmacy workers," Dr Peña said. To keep this chain intact when crossing borders, there should also be a move towards promoting policies and laws that guarantee international collaboration in equal access to quality medicines. "We are not talking about charity, we are talking about justice," she added.

Sustainability of the pharmacy profession, Dr Peña said, requires the freedom for pharmacists to operate without pressure in their professional work. "And it requires economic freedom in which remuneration policies do not limit the capacity of pharmacists to carry out their profession." She added that FIP firmly believes in the urgent need to invest in a fully qualified pharmacy workforce, in sufficient quantity and quality, to meet every need regarding the health of populations around the world.





Dominique Jordan,
Incoming FIP President

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New FIP President

Swiss pharmacist Dominique Jordan was elected as President of FIP for the next four years. Mr Jordan, a community pharmacy owner and former Chief Executive Officer of the Swiss Association of Pharmacists (pharmaSuisse), has served FIP for over a decade, including as Chair of FIP’s Board of Pharmaceutical Practice since 2014.

In his election statement, Mr Jordan said, “Around the globe, health systems face changes due to new trends and demographic, political and economic challenges. It is time for FIP to rethink its role and its benefits for members, partners and society.”

As a President of pharmaSuisse for 12 years, Mr Jordan led advances in the pharmacy profession in Switzerland, which included the introduction

of a postgraduate title for hospital and community pharmacists that is recognised by the federal Government, the introduction of a number of remunerated new pharmacy services and the implementation of an International Organisation for Standardisation compatible quality management system, allowing the evaluation of pharmacies.

“Taking into account the work of past Presidents, I will give new impulses to grow and use the unique potential that FIP has, gathering science, practice and education under one roof. It will be my priority to steer the evolution of FIP regarding its structures, its governance, its procedures and its missions to be in phase with the needs of our members and partners,” he said.

Pharmacists play vital role in improving patient health shows biggest review of evidence to date

Pharmacists serving non-hospitalised patients, such as in general practices and community pharmacies, may achieve improvements in patient health outcomes, according to the most comprehensive systematic review of the scientific evidence to date. A team of researchers, led by Professor Margaret Watson from the University of Bath, working with Cochrane, NHS Education Scotland, and the Universities of Aberdeen, Brunel, California and Nottingham Trent, reviewed 116 scientific trials involving more than 40,000 patients. They compared pharmacist interventions with the usual care or interventions from other healthcare professionals for a wide range of chronic conditions, including diabetes and high blood pressure. Cochrane reviews assess

evidence from as many studies as possible to draw the most reliable conclusions, and are internationally recognised as the highest standard in evidence-based healthcare.

In this review, 111 trials compared pharmacist interventions with usual care. The review authors found that patients in groups that received pharmacist interventions had better outcomes when it came to reducing blood sugar levels and blood pressure, but for others, such as hospital admissions and death rates, the effect was more uncertain although the general direction of effect was positive.

Overall, trials involving pharmacist interventions decreased patients’ HbA1C by 0.8% compared with usual care. A 1% rise in HbA1c is associated with a 28% increased risk of



premature death. Patients' blood pressure was about half as likely to be outside target ranges for individuals receiving pharmacist services, and was on average 5mmHg lower in these patients, a figure associated with a 34% reduction in stroke and a 21% reduction in ischaemic heart disease.

Professor Margaret Watson said, "What is really important about this review is that it shows pharmacist services can achieve clinically relevant improvements for patients, and could lead to benefits for some long-term conditions, particularly diabetes and high blood pressure. We know that these types of long-term conditions are going to increase as the population ages.

"The results of this review indicate that trials of pharmacist services may produce improvements in patient health. As such, future investment in pharmacist services could be informed by the results of this review."

The Cochrane researchers say that the evidence shows that pharmacists could make vital contributions and help the NHS to improve capability, capacity and most importantly patient health in the face of substantial challenges.

FIP policy statement on pharmacists reducing harm associated with drugs of abuse

Governments must work more with pharmacists on providing harm reduction services, and fully involve them in the development of any policies regarding medical or recreational cannabis (marijuana), FIP said in a new Statement of Policy published at the conference.

"This statement is extremely timely, given the escalating number of unnecessary deaths caused by the non-medical use of opioids and other drugs, and given the increasing discussions on cannabis policies around the world," said Andy Gray, Vice President, FIP. "The profession – pharmacists and their national organisations – needs to actively engage with governments and policymakers as these very fluid situations evolve. This is the key message of the statement," Mr Gray added.

This new FIP Statement of Policy follows the publication of FIP's report in November 2017 which described pharmacy services around the world that serve to reduce harm from drugs of abuse. The specifications

made in the report, for what a comprehensive harm reduction service should include (for example, the supply of naloxone), have been affirmed by the FIP Council through their inclusion in the policy statement.

"There is good evidence for involving pharmacists, and community pharmacies in particular, in a wide range of harm reduction activities. And, with regards to the supply of cannabis for medical purposes, the expertise of pharmacists must be utilised," Mr Gray said.

The policy statement points out that an argument could be made, based on harm reduction principles, that pharmacies are the

best option for the supply of cannabis for recreational purposes. However, it stresses that such an approach must only be developed in consultation with pharmacists. Strong opposition from professional organisations to the supply of recreational cannabis from pharmacies is acknowledged. In particular, FIP says that the concerns of pharmacists regarding their ethical obligations and standing in their communities must be carefully considered in the development of such a policy.

The 79th FIP Congress will be held in Abu Dhabi from 22 to 26 September 2019.

