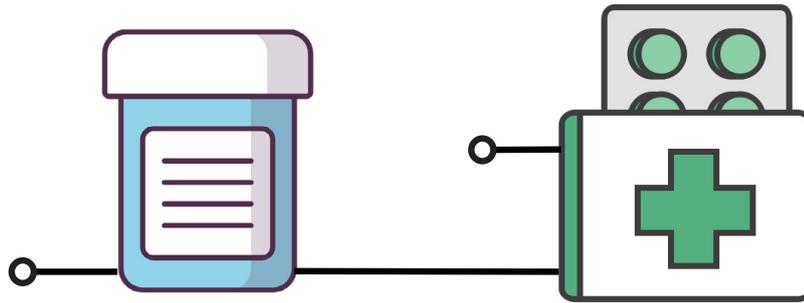


EAHP 2018 Survey on Medicines Shortages



MEDICINES SHORTAGES IN SPANISH HOSPITALS



- 95% of hospital pharmacists are currently experiencing problems with medicines shortages.
- 72% of hospital pharmacists report that medicines shortages are a weekly, sometimes daily, occurrence.
- 70% 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 190 responses were obtained from Spanish hospital pharmacists, with an increase of 85 individuals compared to the 2014 EAHP Medicines Shortages Survey, when 105 responses were received from Spain.

95% of Spanish 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, 95% of respondents answered with “yes”.

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



77% antimicrobial agents



53% cardiovascular medicines



44% preventative medicines



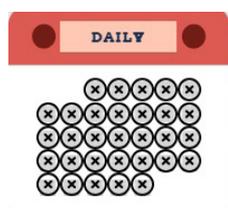
33% oncology medicines



25% emergency medicines

72% of Spanish respondents report that medicines shortages are a weekly, sometimes daily, occurrence

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, 49% (N=93) of respondents replied with “weekly”, while 23% (N=44) experienced medicines shortages on a “daily” basis. The same percentage, 23% (N=44), was reported by respondents that experienced shortages on a monthly 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 Spain, shortages usually last for two months, according to the data collected by EAHP Medicines Shortages Survey.



23% of Spanish hospital pharmacists are affected by shortages on a daily basis



49% of Spanish hospital pharmacists are affected by shortages on a weekly basis



23% of Spanish hospital pharmacists are affected by shortages on a monthly basis

In order to find out the answers to questions on the available information vis-à-vis shortages in Spain, 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 hospital pharmacists in Spain can submit information on shortages and 70% (N=61) believe this system is effective. The Spanish Agency for Drugs and Medical Devices is the entity responsible for shortage reporting in Spain (<https://www.aemps.gob.es/home.htm>).

The following freetext comments were shared by Spanish hospital pharmacists on the functionality of the reporting system:

- “The National Agency receives this information from different sources and then imports the drug from other countries. The system works but it is slow. Shortages reach patients at the hospital level, as well as community level.”
- “The information comes from the Spanish agency of the Medicine. The problem is that the labs do not inform the Agency in advance so the information is delayed.”



70% 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 (56% | N=58) or even up to 10 hours (18% | N=19) during an average working week. Furthermore, 87% (N=89) of 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 Spain, the survey results showed that in 85% (N=84) of the cases, hospital pharmacists informed the prescriber about the shortage and recommended an alternative medicine. Other actions included investigating when the supply will be restored and planning accordingly (60% | N=59), informing the prescriber of a shortage (47% | N=47) or attempting to source the medicine from another supplier (44% | N=44).

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, three out of four 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 26% (N=24) of respondents chose “none of the above” when asked which policy solution they personally supported. This can be a sign that professionals in Spain are well aware of different available options and believe that they are serving their purpose when it comes to drug shortages. 79% (N=74) of respondents would personally support a greater legal clarity on the need to oblige manufacturers to report a forthcoming disruption of supply. Furthermore, 73% (N=69) are 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. Two thirds pointed towards the need to have a more comprehensive database, run by the EMA, listing all medicines shortages linked with advice on how long the shortage may last for and available replacement therapies. Lastly, 57% (N=54) favour an annual reporting system providing information on the extent of the medicines shortages problem within Europe.

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

- *“More control of the regulatory agencies over the pharmaceutical industry is needed to know in advance the real causes of shortages and to prevent them”*
- *“Please work hardly on this issue. It’s very important for us”*

*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