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Finnish Pharmacists' Association

Country Report 2017 Finland

What is Finnish Pharmacists' Association?

Founded in May 1917 – celebrating its centenarian this year!

Association brings together approximately 8000 member Pharmacists all around Finland of which 93 % are women.

Association is the official professional advocate for Finnish Pharmacists working in different sectors offering:

- Occupational and legal counseling for its members
- Education on current topics
- Involvement and support for Pharmacy students
- Recreation and networking with colleagues

Finnish Pharmacists' Association Activities 2016

Association has actively participated in discussions of Pharmacist role and for rational use of medicines in the new comprehensive national healthcare and social welfare system currently being compiled in Finland.

Association has organized several educational and networking sessions for Pharmacists working in different sectors within Finland, to support the Pharmacists in their daily job and to help them develop skills and competencies for future. Specifically for industrial pharmacists the Association organized a training day in Helsinki in September 2016 that gave a good glance for all current pharmacy related topics currently being discussed in Finland. Association also organized a breakfast event in February 2017 where the potential influence of the comprehensive renewal of the national healthcare and social welfare system was discussed among industrial pharmacists.

Association also has active role among pharmacy students and representatives of the Association participated in Pharmacy Students' activities during the year 2016.

Current topics in Pharma Industry in Finland

Below is a summary of the main topics currently being discussed in Finland:

1) Comprehensive Finnish Social welfare and healthcare system reform and implementation programme of rational use of medicines is currently ongoing in Finland and will affect throughoutly the whole healthcare and social welfare system setup in Finland. Previously Finland has had more local variations in the healthcare system due municipality based system but in the future the system will be based on bigger organizational units providing the services in bigger geographical areas. During this reform the role and duties of pharmacists' will also be changed and the benefit of the pharmaceutical care (e.g. clinical pharmacy) should be taken advantage of. The Finnish

Pharmacists' Association and Finnish Pharma Industry is actively emphasizing the role and impact of pharma industry and pharmacists' in the patient care to enable the efficient and successful pharmacotherapy. The renewal of the healthcare and social welfare system has been ongoing now almost for 2 years and by the end of 2017 the main structure and processes are expected to be in place.

2) Renewal of the reimbursement system:

During the past year the limited reimbursement (e.g. diabetes treatment) and risk sharing models have landed to Finland as government way to limit the reimbursement costs and to develop the system. For example in the beginning of 2017 a significant limitation was made to the reimbursement of diabetes medication and it has been recently discussed in public whether the treatment is affordable to ordinary citizens anymore.

3) Government working group established for developing the distribution system of pharmaceuticals

In Finland the distribution and retail of pharmaceuticals is highly controlled by the authorities. Pharmacies are owned by individual Pharmacist, who has been granted the authorization to run a pharmacy. The amount of pharmacies are limited in each area and no company owned or actual pharmacy chains are allowed. A public discussion has been raised whether this system can meet the market needs and secure the availability anymore. To explore this and to develop the pharmacy system, government has established an expert working group. The work is still ongoing but just recently in the end of April the working group published that there will be some kind of limited liberation of the highly controlled pharmacy system to improve the availability of pharmaceuticals and to develop business model of pharmacies to meet better the future market needs.

4) Serialisation and safety features implementation

Finland is actively preparing for the upcoming serialization and safety feature regulation. The Finnish National Medicines Verification System FIMVO has been recently founded and will be the national system to connect with EMVO. Also local pharma industry, wholesalers and pharmacies together with authorities are setting up their internal procedures and IT systems.

What Finland expects from EIPG?

- Offered Webinars appreciated
- EIPG support valuable to emphasize the importance of the specialized competence of industrial pharmacists'
- EIPG actively taking stance on current developments in EU
- EIPG actively informing the members for current topics

How Finnish Pharmacists' Association will contribute to EIPG during coming year?

- Active response on reflection papers and consultations
- Active participation on EIPG events, (e.g. webinars)
- Expertise of Finnish Industrial Pharmacists in use for the benefit of EIPG