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Finnish Pharmacists' Association

Country Report 2018 Finland

What is Finnish Pharmacists' Association?

Founded in May 1917.

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 2017

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 2017 that gave a good glance for all current pharmacy related topics currently being discussed in Finland. Social welfare and health care system reform, data integrity and renewal of reimbursement system (conditional reimbursement) can be used as an example of the topics of the training. Association also organized a breakfast event in March 2018 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 2017.

Current topics in Pharma Industry in Finland

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

1) Case Oriola Oy.

Oriola's new ERP-system change caused a huge problem in the Autumn 2017. Even if the system was validated and tested well, there were many unexpected problems in the system. Due the system problems many pharmacies were without medicines needed (the most acute situation concerned drugs for treatment of cancer and schizophrenia as well

as insulin) and the delivery was totally lost several weeks/months. Finland does have single channel system, which is not due to legislation but rather from business perspective of pharmaceutical companies. Oriola distributes about 46 % of all the medicines in Finland. This also means that changing rapidly from the single distributor to another was not easy task. Single distribution system has been efficient and good system in Finland, but after last autumn there is now discussion if Finland would need to change from single channel system to multichannel system.

Orion Pharma (biggest pharmaceutical company in Finland) already delivers in the different wholesalers after this case. Some pharmacies were not prepared for this kind of event and there is now discussion of the bigger amounts of medicines in their stocks. Fimea has suggested that critical products should be in several wholesalers. It needs to be remembered that the length of this incidence of Oriola was not few days or a week, but we are talking about months of problems.

2) Quarantine processes:

There were some severe situations in Finland during autumn 2017 and beginning of 2018 that medicines under quarantine status went to the saleable stock and to the customer. As a consequence of this Fimea made a questionnaire to all wholesalers (deliverings ones and all pharmaccompanies too).

Currently this is something that is under investigation. After the incidence Fimea also made inspections of quarantine protocols to wholesalers. The incidence happened due to human error.

3) 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.

Everything is set to be ready at 1st of November 2018 and wholesalers are ready in the summer 2018.

4) Discussions of development of pharmacy system in Finland

The discussion of development of pharmacy system is still very active in Finland. At this point some modifications are made to system, but currently it is not possible for example wholesalers to own a pharmacy.

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