

## **National pharmacy practice standard for patient counselling about correct use of antibiotics in Norway**

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**Background information:** Norway has strict national treatment guidelines for antibiotics to promote correct use and prevent overuse and antibiotic resistance. In addition, all antibiotics are prescription-only. It is expected that pharmacists support this by counselling patients about the importance of using prescribed antibiotics correctly. However, there was no national pharmacy practice standard securing uniform and up-to-date patient counselling.

**Purpose:** To develop a national pharmacy practice standard for patient counselling about correct use of prescribed antibiotics in Norway.

**Method:** A close collaboration between the Antibiotic Centre for Primary Care (ASP) and the Norwegian Pharmacy Association (NPA) with representatives from all members, was established. ASP is a national centre of competence established by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, working to promote rational and restricted use of antibiotics in primary care, preventing development of antibiotic resistance in Norway.

It was agreed that a national pharmacy practice standard should be based on always up-to-date knowledge about what patients need to know about their prescribed antibiotics. This knowledge was collected and compiled by expert medical doctors and pharmacists working at ASP and pharmacist from the NPA and their members.

**Results:** Firstly, a guideline including patient information for every antibiotic allowed prescribed in Norway was developed. This includes for instance how to take the medication, storage information, and if avoiding direct sunlight is recommended during intake. This guideline is comprehensive and should be used by pharmacists as an education tool. Then a two-pager short-version of this guideline was developed for the use at the dispensing-counter when filling prescriptions. Lastly, a one-page national practice standard was developed based on the guideline. Additionally, short patient-leaflets about eye infection, cystitis, and upper respiratory infections were developed. These should be used during patient counselling in the non-dispensing part of the pharmacy, where the customer seeks OTC or other items for sale without prescription.

**Conclusion:** Together, ASP, NPA and their members, successfully managed to develop and introduce a national practice standard for patient counselling about correct use of prescribed antibiotics in Norway. All pharmacies will implement it during 2023. This should ensure that all patients receive uniform and up-to-date counselling on correct use of prescribed antibiotics at the pharmacy. Later research can be performed to evaluate compliance and outcome measures. Through this initiative pharmacist promote rational and restricted use of antibiotics in primary care, thus preventing development of antibiotic resistance in Norway. This is in line with FIP Development Workforce Goal 17 to develop a pharmaceutical workforce prepared to deliver quality services for antimicrobial stewardship.