

PORTUGUESE COMMUNITY PHARMACIES: Contribution to Vaccination

Anabela Silva & Rute Horta, Associação Nacional das Farmácias, Portugal

- Portugal has a [National Vaccination Program \(NVP\)](#) since 1965. The NVP has been updated over the years to meet the evolution of diseases and ensure the best benefit for population health. Vaccines included in the National Vaccination Programme are administered, free of charge, by nurses at public health centres and hospitals. Except for a few vaccines only available at International Vaccination Centres (e.g. yellow fever), vaccines not included in the NVP can be prescribed by physicians according to patients' needs and be acquired at pharmacies. These vaccines can then be administered at the pharmacy, at public health centres or at other authorized health services. In all cases, the vaccine administration is usually charged to the person.
- In addition to the National Vaccination Plan, some vaccines are currently being offered by the Portuguese Health Authorities to high risk groups (e.g. Flu vaccine to elderly people; Diabetes Mellitus patient). These vaccines are being administered without prescription and free of charge at public health centres.
- In 2007, a change in the legislation allowed community pharmacies to expand their scope of activity to more differentiated services, such as immunization. As a result, for the past 11 years, vaccines not included in the Portuguese National Vaccination Program can be administered in community pharmacies, upon medical prescription (e.g. flu vaccine, rotavirus vaccine, hepatitis A vaccine and hepatitis B vaccine). Some vaccines included in the NVP may also be administered in the pharmacy for groups not included in the National Vaccination Plan (e.g. HPV vaccine for boys, HPV vaccine for girls older than 10 years-old; pneumococcal vaccine).
- All pharmacies offering vaccination services must fulfil some requirements, as having proper facilities (private office) and providing anaphylactic shock treatment. Vaccines can be administered at the pharmacy by a Nurse or by a Pharmacist certified with a Vaccines and Injectible Drugs Administration Course (endorsed by the Portuguese Pharmacists Society). As a service, charges are applied to people seeking vaccination in the pharmacy, in addition to vaccine acquisition.
- Every vaccine administration is recorded locally in the pharmacy software (GDPR compliant). Since 2017 flu vaccine records are being automatically integrated on the Electronic Vaccination Bulletin (national registry), being then available to other health professionals.
- For the past 10 years, Portuguese pharmacies and Portuguese pharmacists are also running public health campaigns on vaccination and working closely with communities to promote awareness and health literacy on immunization.
- In Portugal there are about 10 million inhabitants, served by 2 922 pharmacies ubiquitously distributed throughout the territory and with an average of 3,4 pharmacists per pharmacy. Both the number of pharmacies per inhabitant and the number of pharmacists per pharmacy are above the European average. Altogether, this guarantee a convenient access to highly qualified health professionals and trusted services. The number of pharmacies providing vaccination has been increasing since the implementation of the service (Kirkdale et al. 2016), currently corresponding to more than 78% of Portuguese pharmacies. Several other countries around the world (e.g. USA, Canada, Australia, UK) authorize vaccination in pharmacies and/or by pharmacists (Rosado and Bates 2016).

DATA FROM FLU VACCINATION SEASON 2017 -20178:

> 78% of all pharmacies
involved in flu vaccination

≈ 518.000 flu vaccines
delivered by pharmacies

≈ 40% of delivered flu vaccines
administered in pharmacies

**Significant number of
patients prefer pharmacies
over public services**, despite
uneven conditions

Estimated that pharmacies
**contributed with 1/3 in flu
vaccination coverage**

Vaccination record data from
the pharmacy informatic
system **automatically
registered on the e-
Vaccination Bulletin** of the
Patient Health Data Platform

Source: CEFAR, Centre for Health Evaluation & Research (ANF Group)

References:

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Rosado, Helena & Bates, Ian. (2016). An overview of the current pharmacy impact on immunisation - A global report 2016.