

The European citizen, keen to enjoy good health and to take more personal responsibility for individual well-being, uses non-prescription medicines for the treatment of minor illnesses, for the prevention of ill health and for a number of chronic diseases.

Pharmacists are experts in medicinal products and advisers to the public on everyday healthcare. Given their expertise and the direct contact with the public in the pharmacy, they are key figures in providing sound advice and personalised information on medicines, bringing an important added value to the pharmaceutical sector. They play a key role in healthcare systems by ensuring the ready and safe provision of medicines to the eventual user.

Manufacturers develop non-prescription medicines of high quality, safety and efficacy. Pharmacists and manufacturers of non-prescription medicines are **partners** as both share the common goal of providing a service and a product of high quality to the public and of supporting the appropriate use of non-prescription medicines.

Healthcare systems throughout Europe are facing important new challenges, including growing demands of access to health services and products, which have important financial consequences. At the same time citizens are willing to be more active partners in the management of their health. Achieving responsible use of medicines and promoting responsible self-medication is important to address the emerging challenges of healthcare systems and to respond to citizens' demands.

Pharmacists are ideally placed to meet these new challenges. They are committed to further developing their pharmacies to be healthcare centres in the community, where the advice of pharmacists and objective information on medicines are accessible to the public at all times. Face-to-face communication between the pharmacist and the public in the pharmacy is a key element to ensure appropriate use of non-prescription medicines. The layout of the pharmacy, the visibility and good presentation of medicines in the pharmacy also play an important role in enhancing communication with the public in the pharmacy. This strengthens the advisory role of the pharmacist on non-prescription medicines, and ultimately in promoting their responsible use.

Manufacturers of non-prescription medicines support pharmacists as key advisers on non-prescription medicines and are committed to assisting them in achieving an ever-higher profile in this regard.

To further develop the specific knowledge and expertise relevant to the non-prescription medicines sector and to enhance the communication between pharmacists and the public in the best interest of public health, attention should be paid to addressing the relevant subjects in the basic training and in the continuing professional development activities undertaken by community pharmacists.

PGEU and AESGP recognise:

- The growing importance of self-care for European health systems
- The importance of partnership in achieving responsible self-medication
- The key expertise of pharmacists in medicines and their key role in enhancing public health
- The importance of enhancing the communication between pharmacists and citizens in the pharmacy, to promote appropriate use of non-prescription medicines thus ensuring responsible self-medication.

In light of the above, the two bodies are committed to working together, to ensure that the best possible service is provided to the public.



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