

Guidelines for pharmaceutical care: the Dutch case

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Background

Since 2010 Dutch pharmacists are developing evidence-based guidelines for pharmaceutical care. Important developments in The Netherlands have urged them to do so. Community pharmacists became legally recognised as independent practitioners and healthcare providers. This obliges them to provide pharmaceutical care according to professional standards. In 2012 a new healthcare system based on free market principles was introduced. Pharmaceutical care services have become subject to free market remuneration and are increasingly regarded as part of managed care disease programs in primary care settings. This strengthened the need for guidelines.

Guideline program

Evidence based guidelines on pharmaceutical care services were nonexistent. Therefore, Dutch community pharmacists needed to establish a brand new program. This program includes development of guidelines for general pharmaceutical services as well as for specific chronic diseases.

Guidelines are developed according an authorised procedure which includes: determining the scope of the guideline, research on literature and other sources, formulation of recommendations in a working group of practitioners, incorporation of patient preferences, research on implementation of recommendations, reviewing by other disciplines (experts and professional associations), independent authorisation using the AGREE-instrument.

Results

Guidelines were developed or are being developed for:

General pharmaceutical services;

- Dispensing of medication (authorised)
- Medication review (authorised)
- Individualised dispensing (authorised)
- Compounding (authorised)
- Patient record keeping (published)
- Medication surveillance (development)
- Patient education on medication use (development)
- Patient advise on self care and non prescription medicines (development)
- Services after discharge from hospitalisation (development)

Chronic diseases;

- COPD (authorised)
- Diabetes mellitus (published)
- Cardiovascular risk management (published)
- Asthma (development)

Writing a guideline takes approximately 12 months. The process of reviewing and authorisation takes another 12 months. Per guideline gaps of evidence on pharmaceutical services have been identified. These gaps may give guidance to pharmaceutical practice research. Indicators are being developed that will help to monitor implementation of the guideline and to improve quality of care.

As a result from the newly developed guidelines pharmaceutical care services are gradually becoming an integral part of Dutch multidisciplinary care standards and local multidisciplinary care programs. Insurers in the Netherlands have also begun to include new guideline based pharmaceutical care services, such as medication review and individualised dispensing, in their contracts with community pharmacists. Guidelines turned out to be useful in recent disputes between pharmacists and the pharmaceutical inspection on quality of pharmaceutical care.

Developing guidelines contributes to anchor the community pharmacist's role as healthcare provider within the (primary) care setting.

For information (in Dutch) about the guidelines see www.knmp.nl/organisatie-regelgeving/normen-en-richtlijnen.