



Proceedings of the Pharmaceutical Care Concept

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How the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the frontline roles of
pharmacy

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A perfect storm?

Definition of 'perfect storm'

perfect storm

Collins COBUILD

Word forms: plural perfect storms

COUNTABLE NOUN [usually singular]

A perfect storm is an unusual combination of events or things that produce an unusually bad or powerful result.

Word Frequency



Prelude to a perfect storm?

- Increasing specialization
- Vast knowledge base to handle
- Novel therapeutic modalities
- Human resource issues



The nature of a crisis

- A crisis is a severe disruption of **production, supply chain** and/or **consumption** on the level of **an individual, a group** and/or a **society**, that results in the **destruction of resources** (values).
- The outcome can be either **good** or **bad**.

Meanwhile, signs of a crisis have started to show...

I don't worry about the debts of my hospital.

It is big enough to take care of itself!

Meanwhile, signs of a crisis have started to show...

- Increasing debt of the public sector (incl. hospitals)
- Halted expansion of public healthcare financing
- Medical and medicinal prices skyrocket
- Declining capacity and availability primary care (esp. post-pandemic)
- Lack of quality metrics, increasing difference between health systems

- Ageing society
- Workforce instabilities

- Inflation, prices/earnings ratio plummets
- Infrastructure becoming more and more expensive to run

...a system ready for a crisis...



...and then, COVID came

- „Healthcare’s earthquake”
- A rare and unpredictable event turning the equilibria of complex systems, especially rigid ones, on their heads.
- *„We propose creating openness to undervalued variables, **under-utilized resources and new values arising from those.**”*



Jennifer Stevens, MD, MS



What did COVID do to the society?

Trust has been fundamentally shaken (shattered?)

- Trust in conventional media
- Trust in governments and authorities
- Trust in (healthcare) professionals
- Trust in (evidence-based) medicine
- Trust in science

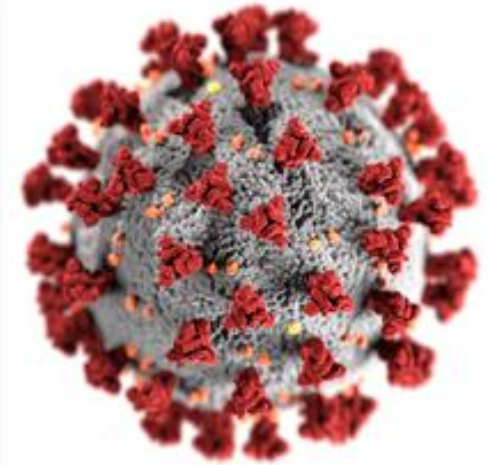


Illustration of a SARS-CoV-2 virion^[1]

What did COVID bring to our profession?

Interpreting the evidence base

- Overwhelming data flow from clinical trials, pre-prints & 'suggestive evidence'
 - Often of underwhelming quality
- High-risk populations in ICUs and Covid-centers
 - Autoimmune conditions, immuno-suppressed patients
 - Severe comorbidities: cardiovascular, hematologic, malignancies
 - Frailty and advanced age



Taking up responsibilities at vaccination centers

- Administering the vaccine went beyond the status quo

Managing vaccine hesitancy & general distrust

- Unbiased, evidence-based information source
- Stay authentic!



How should pharmaceutical care change?

- Safe medicinal therapies
 - Medication Reconciliation & Review
 - Prescribing & Unit/daily dose dispensing
 - Patient follow-up & monitoring
- Optimal medicinal therapies
 - Therapeutic stewardship (ABS, AVS, AFS, etc.)
 - De-prescribing
 - Therapeutic switching (iv/po, biosimilar, generic, etc.)
- Multiprofessional approach in frontline patient care
- **Important: all this happens on all levels of healthcare systems**
- **The concept behind pharmaceutical care is also changing!**

General Frontline Roles

Therapeutic decision support at patient rounds

Medication history taking, medication reconciliation and review

Interpretation and follow-up of laboratory test results

Clinical nutrition

Bedside patient care and education

Roles for Special Patient Groups

Monitoring of antimicrobial (incl. antiviral and antifungal!) therapies

Interaction analysis, risk/benefit assessment

Maintenance of perioperative therapeutic protocols

Pharmaceutical aspects of wound management

Specific dose and kinetics calculations (postnatal, children, elderly)

Roles in Vaccination

To be seen...

Getting the (hospital) pharmacist “out there”

- The evolving role of the profession is showing the importance of the hospital pharmacist in the healthcare teams alongside physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals
- The role of the profession is shifting, and hospital and clinical pharmacists are becoming key stakeholders within the healthcare settings.
- Separate HCP expert area ≠ “playing doctor” / “playing nurse”
- Also, along with the new tasks, **new responsibilities have emerged.**
- **It is the duty of our profession to embrace this change in all its entirety!**

The European Landscape

- Diversity among EU countries
 - Healthcare is a national competence
 - Pan-European coordination became a must during Covid
- Dimensions of cross-national coordination
 - Medicines shortages
 - Covid-related evidence base
 - EAHP Covid Resource Center
 - EAHP Drug Calculation Tool
 - Better preparedness
 - Quality metrics



Preparing the profession for future challenges

- Workforce deficiencies
 - Capacity problems
 - Sufficient number of pharmacist (and pharmacy students)?
 - Is there a competition on the job market between different areas of pharmacy?
 - Is there a declared (or untold) pressure towards shifting this balance in pharmacy schools?
 - Hospital pharmacy competencies
 - Lack of consistency
 - Lack of quality metrics and clear responsibilities
- Seamless transition of care
 - Pharmaceutical care should not *start* and *stop* at transitional points of healthcare systems
 - **Pharmaceutical care should not be about patient “compliance & adherence” anymore!**
 - **The evolution of the pharmaceutical care concept involves pharmacists from the construction of therapies as well!**
 - Can only be achieved via a bottom-up & top-down concurrent approaches paired with closer link between the community/retail and hospital pharmacy sectors

Preparing pharmacy education for future challenges

- Undergraduate training
 - The „Less chemistry!” initiative
 - Medical (clinical) approach needs to be strengthened
- Postgraduate specialization
 - Diverse approach throughout Europe
 - Length? Setting?
 - Residency programs? Clinical rotations?
 - Multi levels and/or sub-specialities and/or licenses?
 - Limitations
 - Time
 - Real-life expertise (of tutors)
 - Residency sites
- Legal requirement status and mutual recognition within EU (Common Training Framework)

„What we as pharmacists believe our profession to be determines what it is”



Wendell T. Hill, Jr. (APhA/ASHP)

Thank you very much for your attention!



**Hospital Pharmacists:
work alongside doctors and nurses
to ensure the best patient care**

#HPCARE4U



Photo: NVZA

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