Community pharmacy in Austria, England, Estonia and Portugal: Has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the range of pharmacy services offered?

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Community pharmacy has been changing over the decades

BACKGROUND

- Community pharmacies form an essential part for patient access to medicines
- The role of community pharmacy has changed over time
- New pharmacy services have been offered

Hypothesis

 COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to changes in community pharmacy services

OBJECTIVES

- To **survey** the state of implementation of community pharmacy services in selected European countries
- To **analyse** similarities & differences in services
- o To assess developments
- To identify potential drivers for change

METHODS

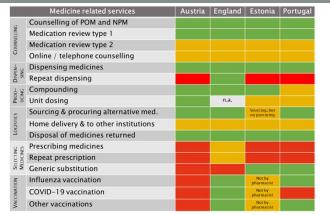
Case study countries

- Mix of different demographic, geographic, economic and health & pharmacy system characteristics
- Four European case study countries: Austria, England, Estonia and Portugal

Survey, validation and analysis

- Development of a **framework** of potential community pharmacy services based on the literature
- Compilation of country fact sheets: pre-filled based on the literature and validated by a country expert (community pharmacist) in writing and during an interview (2023 data)
- Interviews with country experts in the case study countries based on an interview guide (Q4/2022 Q1/2023)

The range of pharmacy services has expanded



- Community pharmacies offer **core & additional pharmacy services** (mostly but not solely medicine related)
- Cross-country and intra-country differences exist with regard to the range of services offered
- **Developments** occurred over time, but some new tasks were offered during the COVID-19 pandemic

Non-medicine related services	Austria	England	Estonia	Portugal
Counselling on general health topics				
Disease-management programs				
Infectious diseases				
Point-of-care testing of health parameters				
Screening programs & collaboration with lab.				
Signposting to other services	ų — j			
Minor ailment schemes				
Needle exchange program	1			
	Counselling on general health topics Disease-management programs Infectious diseases Point-of-care testing of health parameters Screening programs & collaboration with lab. Signposting to other services Minor ailment schemes	Counselling on general health topics Disease-management programs Infectious diseases Point-of-care testing of health parameters Screening programs & collaboration with lab. Signposting to other services Minor ailment schemes	Counselling on general health topics Image: Counselling on general health topics Disease-management programs Image: Counselling on general health parameters Point-of-care testing of health parameters Image: Counselling on general health parameters Screening programs & collaboration with lab. Image: Counselling on general health parameters Signposting to other services Image: Counselling on general health parameters Minor ailment schemes Image: Counselling on general health parameters	Counselling on general health topics Image: Counselling on general health topics Disease-management programs Image: Counselling on general health parameters Point-of-care testing of health parameters Image: Counselling on general health parameters Screening programs & collaboration with lab. Image: Counselling on general health parameters Signposting to other services Image: Counselling on general health parameters Minor ailment schemes Image: Counselling on general health parameters

Green: service offered by all or a substantial share of pharmacies in the country; Yellow: service offered by some pharmacies in the country; Red: service not offered

COVID-19 pandemic was one of the drivers for change

Factors driving developments in community pharmacy in the case study countries



- Several factors have contributed to the development of additional pharmacy services
- Factors may be **facilitating** or **hindering**, in the case study countries they were mainly facilitators
- The **COVID-19 pandemic** appeared to have reinforced some of the supporting factors (e.g., accessibility of community pharmacies, trust in pharmacists) and triggered change

The findings were obtained in a research on community pharmacy in Austria, which included an international comparative analysis. The research was funded by the Austrian Chamber of Pharmacists. A technical report of this study (in German) was published: Salcher-Konrad M, Knoll V, Vogler S (2023): Leistungsspektrum der öffentlichen Apotheken im österreichischen Gesundheitssystem – Bestandsaufnahme, Analyse und Ausblick (in German with an English short summary, title in English: Review and analysis of services provided by community pharmacies in Austria). Vienna: Gesundheit Österreich

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