Gesundheit Österreich GmbH

International Cooperation

Guests at WHO Collaborating Centre

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Policies, affiliated to the Pharmacoeconomics Department, has been regularly hosting fellows and interns.

Visiting fellow from Slovenia

Dr Mitja Kos is Head of the Chair of Social Pharmacy and an associate professor for social pharmacy at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Pharmacy, Slovenia (www.ffa.uni-lj.si). The focus of his scientific and professional activities are health technology assessment, comparative effectiveness and optimisation of drug use with a focus on safety issues. Currently, he is the Chairman of Pharmaceutical Care Network Europe (www.pcne.org), which aims to research and develop pharmacist's contributions to the care of individuals in order to optimise medicines use and improve health outcomes. He is involved in the work of the expert group within Slovene Chamber of pharmacy that is responsible for the development and assurance of the quality of newly developed medication review services (http://www.lek-zbor.si). Recently, he has served as a member of the Health Council at the Ministry of Health of the Republic Slovenia and as a member of two expert commissions at the Agency for Medicinal Products and Medical Devices of the Republic Slovenia: one focusing on the evaluation of clinical trials and the other on medicine prices (www.jazmp.si).

Pricing combined with the reimbursement and cost containment policies form an important focus of research at his department. That is also the primary connection with the Vienna WHO Collaborating Centre for Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Policies. Dr Kos stays with the WHO Collaborating Centre as a research fellow for a period of three months from May to August 2017.

Intern from Boston University

The WHO Collaborating Centre also hosts Ms. Priyanka Raju, Pharm.D, MPH (Global Health) from Boston University School of Public Health, Massachusetts from June to August 2017.

Dr Priyanka Raju earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences. She served as a Clinical Pharmacist and as a research coordinator in India at two quarternary care hospitals, before moving to the US to pursue her master's degree. She received her MPH degree in Global Health from Boston University School of Public Health with a Certificate in Pharmaceuticals Program. Her main areas of expertise lie within Pharmaceutical Sciences, Patient Care and Public Health Research.

Events

Patient Adherence to Medicines & Medication Review Services: 18 July 2017

Dr Mitja Kos, University of Ljubljana and Chair of the Pharmaceutical Care Network Europe (PCNE), gives a colloquium about the practice of Patient Adherence to Medicines & Medication Review Services. Medication adherence is the extent to which a person's medication taking corresponds with agreed recommendations from a health care provider. Poor adherence to long-term therapies significantly undermines the effectiveness of treatment and represents an important issue in disease control. Medication review is a structured evaluation of a patient's medicines with the aim of optimising medicines use and improving health outcomes.

Venue: Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (Austrian Public Health Institute), Biberstraße 20, 1010 Vienna

Date: Tuesday, 18 July 2017, 17.30 hours

For registration:
http://www.goeg.at/de/ueberunsgoegveranstaltungen/GOeG-Colloquium-Patient-Adherence-to-Medicines_Medication-Review-Services.html

Save-the-Date: Panel Discussion on Initiatives to Increase Payers' Purchasing Power

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Policies, together with the World Health Organization (WHO), Regional Office for Europe, organises a public panel discussion on 'Strengthening the purchasing power for medicines – possibilities and risks'. The debate will address questions around cross-border collaborations (e.g. BeNeLuxA) in the field of medicines, and their possible impact on access and affordability. Panellists represent industry, patients, physicians, public payers and WHO.

Venue: Austrian Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs, Vienna

Date: Wednesday, 30 August 2017, 17 hours

Further information and registration will be announced at: whocc.goeg.at

PPRI goes CIS

Network for competent authorities

The Department runs the Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Information (PPRI) network that comprises competent authorities for pharmaceutical pricing and reimbursement in 46, mainly European, countries. The aim of the network is to collect and share information about pricing and reimbursement policies for medicines and to exchange lessons learnt about best practices.

Since there is no equivalent networking and information-sharing opportunity or forum for non-European Union countries, the WHO, Regional Office for Europe and the WHO Collaborating Centre for Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Policies held a meeting in Chisinau on 13-14 June 2017 to identify approaches of collaboration with Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) through more targeted cooperation in a CIS PPRI network.

Further information about PPRI:
http://whocc.goeg.at/About/PPRI

http://whocc.goeg.at/Literaturliste/Dokumente/Articles/Vogler_PPRI_HealthPolicyTechnology_2014.pdf

Austrian Medical Devices Registry

New regulations on medical devices

The new European regulations on medical devices and in vitro diagnostic medical devices were published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 5 May 2017 and came into force on 25 May 2017. A three-year transitional period applies to medical devices, a five-year transitional period to in vitro diagnostic medical devices. The Austrian Act on Medical Devices must be adapted to the new regulations.

Read more: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L:2017:117:FULL&from=DE

Austrian Medical Devices Registry:
http://www.medizinprodukteregister.at

Publications

Tendering for off-patent medicines

Experts of the Department investigated the impact of the tendering policy for off-patent medicines in the out-patient sector in terms of availability of medicines and of savings for public payers. This was done for three case study countries: Belgium, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Information was collected through a literature review and interviews with 14 key stakeholders in the countries. The findings suggest that tendering for off-patent medicines is able to contribute to cost-containment. However, as the policy possibly risks leading to availability limitations, it has to be strategically designed to avoid or at least deal with shortages through backup mechanisms. Further prerequisites for a successful introduction of tendering include a robust legal and organisational framework, an appropriate stakeholder management, and demand-side policies to promote generic uptake.

Vogler S, Zimmermann N, Gombocz M. Tendering for off-patent outpatient medicines: Lessons learned from experiences in Belgium, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Journal of Pharmaceutical Health Services Research. Online First. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jphs.12180/full

Pricing policies for biosimilar medicines

Which policies have been implemented for pricing and promoting the use of biosimilar medicines? Experts of the PPRI Secretariat, affiliated to the Department, performed a survey with competent authorities for pricing and reimbursement involved in the PPRI network to explore pricing and demand-side policies applied for biosimilar medicines and to study similarities and differences with policies for generic medicines. The study covered 40 European countries, Canada and South Africa.

A common method for pricing generics and, though to a lesser extent, biosimilar medicines is to set prices at a defined percentage beneath that of the originator price ('price link' policy). The findings suggest that, while pricing policies and instruments to enhance the uptake of generics are advanced, countries appear to be struggling to find the most appropriate approach for biosimilar medicines.

Vogler S, Schneider P. Do pricing and usage-enhancing policies differ between biosimilars and generics? Findings from an international survey. Generics and Biosimilars Initiative (GaBI) journal, Volume 6, Issue 2, 2017. Online first: http://gabi-journal.net/do-pricing-and-usage-enhancing-policies-differ-between-biosimilars-and-generics-findings-from-an-international-survey.html

Further recently published articles

Pauwels K, Huys I, Vogler S, Casteels M, Simoens S. Managed Entry Agreements for oncology drugs: lessons from the European experience to inform the future. Frontiers in Pharmacology 2017; 8: 171. http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fphar.2017.00171/full

Vogler S, Peterson K. Can price transparency contribute to more affordable patient access to medicines? Pharmacoeconomics – Open. Online First 2017 https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41669-017-0028-1

List of publications of the Pharmacoeconomics Department: http://whocc.goeg.at/Publications/

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Stubenring 6, 1010 Vienna, Austria
Email: pharmanews@goeg.at
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