



# LET'S TALK ABOUT VACCINES!

## » THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF PHARMACISTS IN VACCINATION



### **Broadening vaccination accessibility**

Pharmacists stand as one of the most accessible healthcare professionals. On average, patients visit their local pharmacies nearly twice as often as they visit their primary doctors.<sup>1</sup> This accessibility is particularly crucial in underserved areas, ensuring that a larger segment of the population has access to vital vaccinations.



### **The global impact of pharmacists in boosting immunisation rates**

- **Multifaceted roles in vaccination:** Pharmacists play vital roles as educators, facilitators and administrators in the vaccine distribution chain.<sup>4</sup> Their impact is globally recognised, with at least 26 countries worldwide, according to FIP data,<sup>5</sup> legally empowering pharmacists to administer vaccines. The specifics of these roles, such as the types of vaccines administered, are determined by local laws and regulations.

- **Evidence from low- and middle-income countries:** A systematic review spotlighted the invaluable role of pharmacists in vaccination services within low- and middle-income countries.<sup>3</sup> Most notably, they championed vaccine advocacy and education. In a survey of 25 countries, pharmacists directly administered vaccines in eight, while an additional six permitted vaccinations to be carried out in pharmacies by other healthcare professionals.<sup>6</sup>

- **The contribution of pharmacists to vaccination strategies** is particularly relevant in countries or territories with health workforce capacity challenges, or where there is great pressure on general practice and primary care centres. Task sharing and expanding and diversifying vaccination pathways is crucial to achieve appropriate vaccination coverage.



### **Pharmacists as beacons of reliable information on vaccines**

- **Building vaccine confidence:** Due to their accessibility, pharmacists are in a prime position to address vaccine concerns and hesitancy through direct interaction with patients. Common concerns include vaccine efficacy and safety, including potential side effects and ingredients. It is imperative to communicate that most vaccine preservatives have been extensively studied and are well tolerated<sup>7</sup> Also, preservatives are present in minute amounts, with negligible physiological impact. A prevalent myth linking vaccines to autism has been unequivocally debunked.<sup>3</sup>

- **Clarifying vaccine efficacy:** Questions have arisen about the flu vaccine's effectiveness since its formulation is based on strain predictions. While there may be mismatches with circulating strains, current data across various demographics show a consistent reduction in disease severity, hospitalisation rates and infection instances when patients are vaccinated.<sup>7</sup>

## » BENEFITS OF PHARMACY-BASED VACCINATION



### Convenience and flexibility

- Pharmacies typically offer extended hours and welcome walk-in patients, making it easier for individuals to receive vaccines on their own schedules.
- Unlike clinics, where waiting times can be long and exposure to sick patients is possible, pharmacies provide a quicker service in a more controlled environment.



### Positive patient experience

- Feedback indicates that patients often find immunisation services at pharmacies superior to those at other healthcare locations.<sup>2</sup>
- The ease of access, professionalism and efficiency lead to higher patient satisfaction and better adherence to recommended vaccinations.



### Pharmacists as vaccination advocates

- Research reveals that when pharmacists recommend vaccines, their influence is comparable to that of nurses and doctors in swaying patient decisions.<sup>3</sup>
- They are trained not just in administering vaccines but also in their safe storage, in recognising potential adverse reactions and in providing timely counselling.
- Furthermore, pharmacists are equipped to guide patients through vaccination schedules, ensuring they understand the importance and timing of each dose.

## » KEY TAKEAWAYS

### Front-line healthcare champions:

As readily accessible healthcare professionals, pharmacists have an unmatched reach across diverse patient demographics.

### Specialised training

In many countries, some pharmacists have the training to administer vaccines safely, but all pharmacists possess the knowledge to educate individuals about their benefits and implications.

### Building vaccine confidence:

With their frequent patient interactions, pharmacists are uniquely positioned to address vaccine concerns, dispel myths and, consequently, enhance vaccine uptake.

## » REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the bibliography and additional information, check the FIP vaccination microsite:

[www.fip.org/letstalkaboutvaccines](http://www.fip.org/letstalkaboutvaccines)



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## » RESOURCES

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