



THE GLOBAL THREAT OF AIR POLLUTION AND ITS IMPACT ON PATIENT CARE:

SUPPORTING PHARMACY PRACTICE AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

REPORT 1

A scientific initiative funded by  Consumer Healthcare.



THE GLOBAL THREAT OF AIR POLLUTION AND ITS IMPACT ON PATIENT CARE:

SUPPORTING PHARMACY PRACTICE AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A roundtable organized by
The Clean Breathing Institute
& International Pharmaceutical
Federation (FIP)

Meeting report

6th May 2021



EMPOWERING OUR PHARMACY'S AROUND AIR POLLUTION AND RESPIRATORY HEALTH

Air pollution, and its impact on respiratory health, is a growing problem. As frontline primary healthcare professionals, pharmacists are ideally positioned to tackle this issue. In order to explore new ways to support pharmacy teams, the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) and GSK's scientific initiative, The Clean Breathing Institute (TCBI), convened a global panel of 24 pharmacists and experts on 6 May 2021.

Opening the event, the third in this series of roundtables aimed at improving support around air pollution and respiratory health, Robert Friedline, Chief Executive of the TCBI, recognised the critical role pharmacy teams played during the pandemic. He explained how COVID-19 has shown how the contribution of community pharmacies is growing and evolving.

The aim of the session was to explore what is required to empower pharmacy teams to optimise patient care in the face of air pollution.

“Air pollution and climate change are dramatically shifting the global pattern of respiratory diseases.”

Lars-Åke Söderlund,
President, Community Pharmacy
Section, FIP

BREATHE BETTER



PHARMACISTS PLAY A UNIQUE ROLE IN RAISING AWARENESS

Community pharmacists are uniquely placed to help patients tackle the health impact of air pollution. This session was divided into two parts focused on how to identify professional services and tools for pharmacists, and how to provide pharmacists with the skills and support they need to provide such services for patients:

Part 1: Defining and prioritizing needs in pharmacy practice services and support tools

Part II: Defining and prioritizing needs and identifying education and training pathways for pharmacy team development

The first session identified the following services and activities by pharmacists, which were then discussed in terms of their education and training needs in the second session:

- Raising awareness and educating patients and the community about the impact of air pollution.
- Differential support to cold/flu/sinusitis but also supporting those with chronic respiratory diseases as asthma and COPD.
- Screening for symptoms of the impact of pollution

“Community pharmacies are key to creating awareness and ensuring patients are getting practical advice to manage both the short- and long-term effects of air pollution and respiratory health.”

Lars-Åke Söderlund,
President, Community Pharmacy
Section, FIP

RAISING AWARENESS

PUSHING AIR POLLUTION TO THE TOP OF THE AGENDA

PART I: PHARMACY PRACTICE SERVICES AND SUPPORT TOOLS

- **Awareness and education**

The experts agreed that while pharmacists around the world are highly focused on respiratory conditions such as asthma and COPD (including smoking cessation services and improving inhaler use, for example), there was a need for greater awareness of the impact of air pollution.

Pharmacy services should address the effects of air pollution on health, with a focus on the most vulnerable, such as the elderly or those with chronic respiratory conditions.

It was suggested that services could leverage real time, local air quality data, potentially displayed in the pharmacy, to help patients understand when they are most at risk, with the support of pharmacists to advise them. There is also an opportunity to promote non-pharmacological interventions, such as greener lifestyles to reduce air pollution. Campaigns, leaflets, apps, smart tech and conversations could also be used to help educate patients.

- **Differential support**

Pharmacy services should provide differential support for colds, flu and sinusitis patients, by identifying and providing specific solutions for these patients and advising on how air pollution may be impacting on their symptoms. Support should also be offered to those with chronic conditions such as asthma and COPD, for example promoting the correct use of inhalers and avoiding triggers that could make their symptoms worse.

- **Screening for symptoms of the impact of pollution**

Screening services could use tools like peak exploratory flow, oximeters or spirometry to measure the impact of air pollution on patient health. This would help to both raise awareness and help to identify patients who should be referred on to other health professionals. For this approach to work it was noted that pharmacists need to be trained to identify signs and symptoms and how to use screening tools accurately and use the findings to advise patients or refer them to other health professionals when appropriate.

“As pharmacists we are so focused on treatment, which is important, but the impact of [air] pollution is where we need to be more proactive in talking to patients.”

Kristina Billberg,
Former President of Swedish
Pharmacists Association

BECOMING “BREATHE BETTER” EXPERTS

PART II: EDUCATION AND TRAINING PATHWAYS FOR PHARMACY TEAM DEVELOPMENT

- **Awareness and education**

When it came to skills, it was noted that **there is currently little or no training for pharmacists that specifically focuses on air pollution**. This training is crucial and should cover basic, intermediate and advanced levels. Education could be delivered from undergraduate level through to CPD courses to boost the skills of practicing pharmacists. Training should also cover both diagnosed and undiagnosed patients.

A key area of **focus was building communication skills** to help pharmacists become champions of air pollution awareness. Pharmacists can also help patients to understand preventative measures to help mitigate the effects of air pollution, such as **masks and nasal hygiene**.

- **Differential support**

Correctly identifying the symptoms of different respiratory conditions is crucial to adequately support patients. Pharmacists need support and training to recognise these symptoms, offer the best advice and self-care treatments, make referrals to other healthcare professionals and help patients understand the link between air pollution and their symptoms.

It was recognised that not all pharmacies would be able to offer the same level of expertise, but that there was an opportunity for some to become **‘Breathe Better’** support centres, delivering specialist air pollution services.

- **Screening for symptoms of the impact of pollution**

The panel recognised the value of screening tools but noted that their use requires a level of competency, which needs to be maintained over time. Specialist skills are required for spirometry, both for its use and the interpretation of results. As such, **any pharmacy offering such services should be properly accredited**.

- **Training delivery**

Webinars, educational materials such as decision trees and algorithms, online courses, practice guidelines and training modules are all required to support this training.

“The roundtable was a success in providing solutions and plans to empower pharmacists with the required competencies to take up new roles as healthcare providers.”

.....
Rula Darwish,
Lead for CPD Domain, FIP
Workforce Development Hub

“A competent workforce is absolutely critical if we’re going to have credibility as pharmacists providing these services... you must be accredited to a certain level.”

.....
Paul Sinclair,
Chair of FIP Board of Pharmaceutical Practice

THANK YOU TO OUR EXPERTS

Pharmacists have a unique and vital role to play in raising awareness of air pollution and its impact on respiratory health. FIP and The Clean Breathing Institute are committed to working together to help deliver the support pharmacy teams need to improve the health of the communities they serve.

Thank you to our **expert panel** for their contributions.

“There is a huge lack of awareness of air pollution, not only among pharmacies, but also among the public. But we have identified many interesting solutions, and these will help to drive and increase the awareness of respiratory diseases linked to air pollution [helping to position] the community pharmacy as a Breathe Better centre”

.....
Lars-Åke Söderlund

President, Community Pharmacy
Section, FIP

BREATHE BETTER TOGETHER.

15 JUNE 2021

13.00-14:30 CEST

Outdoor and indoor air pollution:
short- and long-term impacts on
respiratory health

.....

12 AUGUST 2021

13.00-14.30 CEST

Community pharmacy roles, services
and tools to minimise impact of air
pollution on health

.....

7 SEPTEMBER 2021

13.00-14.30 CEST

Leveraging pharmacists to minimise
the impact of air pollution on health:
Policy barriers and drivers





THE GLOBAL THREAT OF AIR POLLUTION AND ITS IMPACT ON PATIENT CARE:

SUPPORTING PHARMACY PRACTICE AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

REPORT 2

A scientific initiative funded by  Consumer Healthcare.



THE GLOBAL THREAT OF AIR POLLUTION AND ITS IMPACT ON PATIENT CARE:

SUPPORTING PHARMACY PRACTICE AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A roundtable organized by
The Clean Breathing Institute
& International Pharmaceutical
Federation (FIP)

Meeting report

7th June 2021



MOBILISING PHARMACISTS TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF AIR POLLUTION ON HEALTH

Following on from the first roundtable held on May 6 the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) and GSK's scientific initiative, The Clean Breathing Institute (TCBI), have worked together to draft a Call to Action (CTA). The Call to Action is based on the output of the previous meeting and on June 7 a panel of 14 pharmacists and experts from around the globe met to explore ideas to develop and activate the goals outlined in the CTA.

The session had two clear objectives:

- To present the Call to Action and to discuss how to implement the recommendations and address any policy barriers
- To gather consensus around the Call to Action to support the implementation and adaptation by member organisations and stakeholders

The event addressed three key areas:

- Practical use of the Call to Action
- Drivers and policy barriers to expanding pharmacists' role in relation to air pollution
- How to prioritise and progress actions linked to the CTA at country level

The session also considered what advocacy topics or messages should be prioritised for the Clean Air Week campaign beginning on 6 September 2021.

SUPPORTING PHARMACISTS TO TACKLE AIR POLLUTION AND RESPIRATORY HEALTH

PRACTICAL USE OF THE CTA

The CTA is a vital advocacy piece, but it was agreed that there must be a tailored, needs-based approach to implementing it around the world.

Different roles for different stakeholders

All stakeholders do have an advocacy role, but some have additional, differential roles. FIP members can have more of an implementation role, advancing services and addressing workforce development. Academic institutions can play a role in education and empowering pharmacists with the appropriate competencies.

Recognising differences

It was also recognised throughout the session that it is critical to tailor the approach to different contexts, cultures and local factors, while prioritising vulnerable societies and populations who are most at risk from air pollution and associated health risks. It was noted that it would be important to adopt a tailored approach due to the different pharmacy scopes of practice.

Delivering impact through data

The panel all agreed that it is important to demonstrate the impact of air pollution through data. This data could be used to illustrate the link between air pollution and respiratory symptoms at a local, national or even global level. It could also be used to create toolkits that could be tailored to local settings and shared with medical professionals and other stakeholders.

RAISING AWARENESS

“It makes most sense if we can tailor the Call to Action to the local situation... I think this would make it a global framework with a local adaptation”

Job van Boven,
Chair, Dutch Respiratory
Pharmacists Group
(KNMPSIG Long)

Health factors should be more carefully treated, because mostly here in Brazil, we have the question of vulnerability. There are people here living in poverty, with mould and dust in their homes. They are suffering a lot with air pollution.”

Josélia Frade,
Brazilian Federal Council
of Pharmacy

TAKING ACTION TO ADDRESS HEALTH IMPACT OF AIR POLLUTION

EXPANDING PHARMACISTS' ROLE IN RELATION TO AIR POLLUTION

DRIVING FORWARDS

Several actions that could help to drive the CTA forwards emerged during the session:

- FIP Global Pharmaceutical Observatory could work with organisations to collate data that can inform guidelines locally, regionally and globally to help pharmacists become advocates.
 - Partnerships with local organisations e.g. expert and patient organisations, that have a stake in air pollution including other medical groups and government will be vital to help demonstrate impact.
 - Utilising digital technologies to address the issue
- Barriers to break down

The experts identified a few barriers that will need to be overcome to help pharmacists become better breathing advocates:

- Pharmacies have different scopes of practice and levels of competency, and this would influence how they can respond to the CTA.
- A regulatory framework is required to support pharmacists in their roles and to deliver services to address and mitigate the issues arising from air pollution. This may require legislation change driven by government.
- There is a need to mitigate risks such as workforce capacity shortages.
- Pharmacy teams need to have their skills developed through competency-based training.
- A more practical framework and toolkit to support the implementation of the CTA is required

“Professional associations have a crucial role to play, not only by promoting new professional roles and services, but also defining competency frameworks used in workforce development. They can also foster interprofessional collaboration for better patient care and to increase the relevance of the role of pharmacists in the community.”

Isabel Jacinto,

Executive Director, Escola de Pós Graduação em Saúde e Gestão, Portugal

PUTTING WORDS INTO ACTION IN PHARMACY

PRIORITISING AND PROGRESSING ACTION

The experts suggested many ways in which the CTA could be progressed to allow pharmacists to deliver real action on air pollution. Ideas included:

- Raising awareness of pharmacists' role in managing respiratory conditions.
- Developing pilot studies to help create practical global frameworks and toolkits that can be adapted locally.
- Creating public awareness of the risks of air pollution and ensuring environmental health literacy.
- Interprofessional training to support pharmacists to become more proactive about tackling the impact of air pollution on health.
- Adequate remuneration for pharmacists to prioritise air pollution.
- Research into the potential cost savings that could be made through pharmacy intervention.
- Starting early to include the impact of air pollution as part of the undergraduate curriculum.

INTERNATIONAL CLEAN AIR DAY

The Call for Action will be launched on 7 September to coincide with the International Clean Air Day. This could involve representatives from each country and from FIP helping to create national groups to carry out the project.

“This is a collaborative, multidisciplinary effort that has to involve people and we have to raise awareness so that we can all move towards having a better situation in the future.”

Ema Paulino,

Professional Secretary, FIP

THANK YOU TO OUR EXPERTS

FIP and The Clean Breathing Institute are committed to working together to help deliver the support pharmacy teams need to improve the health of the communities they serve. Thank you to all the experts for their contributions.

Thank you to our **expert panel** for their contributions.

“Thank you to everyone for taking the time. It’s always great to listen to the unified and collective voices on what we could be doing as we drive this call to action and to move forward. The power is here. The building of all of the ideas and what we can do is definitely just so passionate and such a humbling experience.”

.....

Robert Friedline

Chief Executive of the TCBI

BREATHE BETTER TOGETHER.

12 AUGUST 2021

13:00 - 14:30 CEST

Community pharmacy roles, services
and tools to minimise impact of air
pollution on health

.....

7 SEPTEMBER 2021

13:00 - 14:30 CEST

Leveraging pharmacists to minimise
the impact of air pollution on health:
Policy barriers and drivers

.....

