



FIP COMMITMENT TO LEVERAGING PHARMACISTS TO BUILD VACCINE CONFIDENCE AND ADDRESS VACCINE HESITANCY AND COMPLACENCY

Vaccination strategies will not be universal and fully successful until the global challenge of vaccine hesitancy is adequately addressed.

Vaccine hesitancy — concerns related to vaccination or outright refusal to receive vaccines despite availability — is a major threat to global health and an important barrier to the success of vaccination strategies worldwide.ⁱ Barriers such as misinformation and distrust in vaccines can compromise not only the health of individuals but also public health as a whole.

The World Health Organization (WHO) cites complacency, inconvenience and lack of confidence as the primary factors behind vaccine hesitancy.ⁱⁱ Understanding vaccine hesitancy is complex because a patient's concerns with vaccination often exist on a spectrum. There is variance in the level of distrust towards vaccines across geographical location, patient demographics and type of vaccine in question.ⁱⁱⁱ

Additionally, the new digital age has made it easier than ever to share information which may not be based on scientific evidence, yet has just as much potential to shape public opinion.^{iv}

Vaccine hesitancy and concerns can be due to a variety of factors, including concerns over safety, efficacy, moral/philosophical issues or poor health literacy, for example.

This effect is further exacerbated during periods of global uncertainty such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, in February 2020, the WHO officially declared a concomitant “infodemic” in response to the massive amounts of misinformation shared regarding COVID-19.^v

As such, addressing vaccine hesitancy, building vaccine confidence and effectively communicating the value of vaccines to patients is an imperative for global health and for the pharmacy profession in particular.

The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), which brings together 146 organisations of pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists and pharmaceutical educators, and represents over four million pharmacists from around the world, believes it is essential that pharmacy and other civil society organisations join forces and outline synergistic and complementary advocacy actions for broader access to and convenience of vaccination services through a diversity of providers and pathways, and to address vaccine hesitancy from multiple perspectives.

FIP has advocated a greater participation of pharmacists in the vaccination space through a variety of roles, ranging from improving community awareness and providing evidence-based advice, addressing vaccine hesitancy and concerns, distributing and dispensing vaccines, administering vaccines and updating vaccination records. These roles were supported by the World Health Organization in the joint WHO-FIP Guidelines on Good Pharmacy Practice in 2011,^{vi} and they continue to expand year after year worldwide in a consolidated manner.^{vii, viii}

Pharmacists' accessibility, expert knowledge, trust by populations and frequent interactions with patients make them uniquely positioned to engage in meaningful conversations and tackle vaccine hesitancy. This crucial role can contribute to increasing vaccination coverage rates and improving protection to individuals and communities.

FIP commits to support this important role by pharmacists and advocates the widespread utilisation of pharmacists to overcome vaccine hesitancy, complacency, misinformation and disinformation around the world. In this way, pharmacists can fulfil their role as advisors, supporters and implementers of public health globally.

FIP commits to join forces with other healthcare professionals' organisations, and other allied civil society organisations to raise awareness about this major threat to global health and to advocate actions to minimise its impact on vaccination coverage and on individual- and community-level immunity against vaccine-preventable diseases.

The Hague, World Immunisation Week, April 2022

ⁱ World Health Organization, 2019. Ten threats to global health in 2019. Available at <https://www.who.int/es/news-room/spotlight/ten-threats-to-global-health-in-2019> (Accessed October 2021)

ⁱⁱ Idem

ⁱⁱⁱ United Nations Children's Fund. Vaccine Misinformation Management Field Guide, 2020. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/mena/reports/vaccine-misinformation-management-field-guide>. (Accessed October 2021)

^{iv} Puri N, Coomes EA, Haghbayan H et al. Social media and vaccine hesitancy: new updates for the era of COVID-19 and globalized infectious diseases. Hum Vaccin Immunother. 2020;16(11):2586-93. Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32693678/>. (Accessed October 2021)

^v World Health Organization. Immunizing the Public Against Misinformation [Internet]. 2020. updated 2021. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/immunizing-the-public-against-misinformation>. (Accessed October 2021)

^{vi} International Pharmaceutical Federation and World Health Organization, 2011. Good Pharmacy Practice: Joint FIP/WHO Guidelines on GPP – Standards for quality of pharmacy services. Available at: https://www.fip.org/files/fip/WHO/GPP%20guidelines%20FIP%20publication_final.pdf. (Accessed October 2021)

^{vii} International Pharmaceutical Federation, 2016. An overview of current pharmacy impact on immunisation: A global report. Available at: <https://www.fip.org/file/162> (Accessed October 2021)

^{viii} International Pharmaceutical Federation, 2021. An overview of pharmacy's impact on immunisation coverage. A global survey. Available at: <https://www.fip.org/file/4751> (Accessed October 2021)

**THIS FIP COMMITMENT HAS BEEN ENDORSED
BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:**



Active Citizenship Network /
Cittadinanzattiva



Immunize.org



IFPMA

International Federation of
Pharmaceutical Manufacturers
and Associations (IFPMA)



Meningitis Research Foundation



AFPLP

Association of Pharmacists from
Portuguese-Speaking Countries
(AFPLP)



Influenza Diabetes Community
(IDC) / European Scientific
Working Group on Influenza
(ESWI)



International Federation on
Ageing (IFA)

shot@life



Shot@Life, UN Foundation



Commonwealth Pharmacists
Association



International Conference of
French-Speaking Orders of
Pharmacists (CIOPF)

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Council on Ageing (EICA)



International Diabetes
Federation (IDF)



International Primary Care
Respiratory Group (IPCRG)



World Dental Federation (FDI)



European Society of Clinical
Pharmacy (ESCP)



International Federation of
Gynecology and Obstetrics



International Society of
Oncology Pharmacy
Practitioners (ISOPP)



World Federation of Public
Health Associations (WFPHA)