My day with Oncology Pharmacy – The Netherlands

Kathleen Simons[1]* (Pharm.D), Ellen Derissen[1] (Pharm.D; PhD) and Mirjam Crul[2] (Pharm.D; PhD)

[1.] Hospital Pharmacy ETZ (Elisabeth-TweeSteden Ziekenhuis), Tilburg (* retired); [2.] Department of Clinical Pharmacology and Pharmacy Amsterdam UMC

1. Introduction

Through an ESOP survey in March and April 2024, professionals were asked about their working situation in the preparation and/or delivery of ready-to-use or oral cytotoxic drugs. All relevant daily working processes were addressed, including activities in prescription and validation of cytotoxic drugs and clinical pharmaceutical support in patient care. This poster presents the specific evaluation for the Netherlands. Pharmacists from 3 hospitals completed the survey, 2 of them are university hospitals. Their answers represent the actual situation in The Netherlands.

2. Materials and methods

The survey with 17 questions was translated into different languages and performed nationally using a web-based application.

3. Results and discussion

Medication prescription:

Setting up medication schedules takes place in collaboration between the medical specialists and pharmacists.

Medication prescription and verification is done 100% electronically.

Validation of prescriptions from physicians is done by pharmacists, this is about 50% of the daily workload.

Preparation and release:

Compounding of parenteral cytotoxic drugs is done centrally by pharmacy technicians in controlled environments.

All hospitals manufacture oncologicals according to the Dutch GMP-Z3 and Z4 guidelines by volumetric or gravimetric procedure and sometimes robotically (Fig.1).

Release of produced medications is done by pharmacists or specifically trained technicians; this is about 12% of the daily workload.

Multi-disciplinary patient care:

Clinical Pharmacy has increased, and, in most hospitals, pharmacists participate in multi-professional treatment teams (Fig. 2).

Participation of pharmacists in patient rounds and tumour boards is implemented in most hospitals.

Patient consultation on pharmaceutical issues and side effects is done by pharmacists.

Data access and transfer:

At each admission and discharge, medication reconciliation is performed routinely by pharmacy technicians.

Pharmacy staff has access to all relevant patient records.

Fig. 1: Robotic compounding in the Netherlands

Fig. 2: Multiprofessional patient meeting

Conclusion

In the Netherlands, oncology pharmacists combine clinical tasks with technical manufacturing responsibilities to provide optimal care for patients with cancer.

The national curriculum for hospital pharmacists offers the option of specialization in oncology pharmacy.

Contact

Mirjam Crul
Hospital Pharmacy AUMC Locatie VuMC
m.crul@amsterdamumc.nl
www.amsterdamumc.nl

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