

What is the role of the pharmacist in the health supply chain?

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Summary

- Why discuss pharmacists in health supply chain
- Overview of working group and methodology
- Selected results from this research



Acknowledgment

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Drivers

Supply chains as the arteries of care

Medicines are essential to the provision of universal health care services in all countries, with the role of governments to ensure that the populations they serve have appropriate access to quality health products via sustainable, quality driven health supply chains.

Pharmacists play various roles including assuring quality of medications, their appropriate use and adequate pharmacovigilance

- **Emergency and military**
- **Counterfeit medicines**
- **Globally a lack of health care professionals & support personnel**



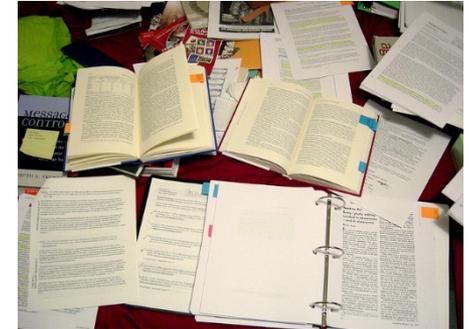
PSC TWG Methods

Literature review

Primary survey data

Case studies

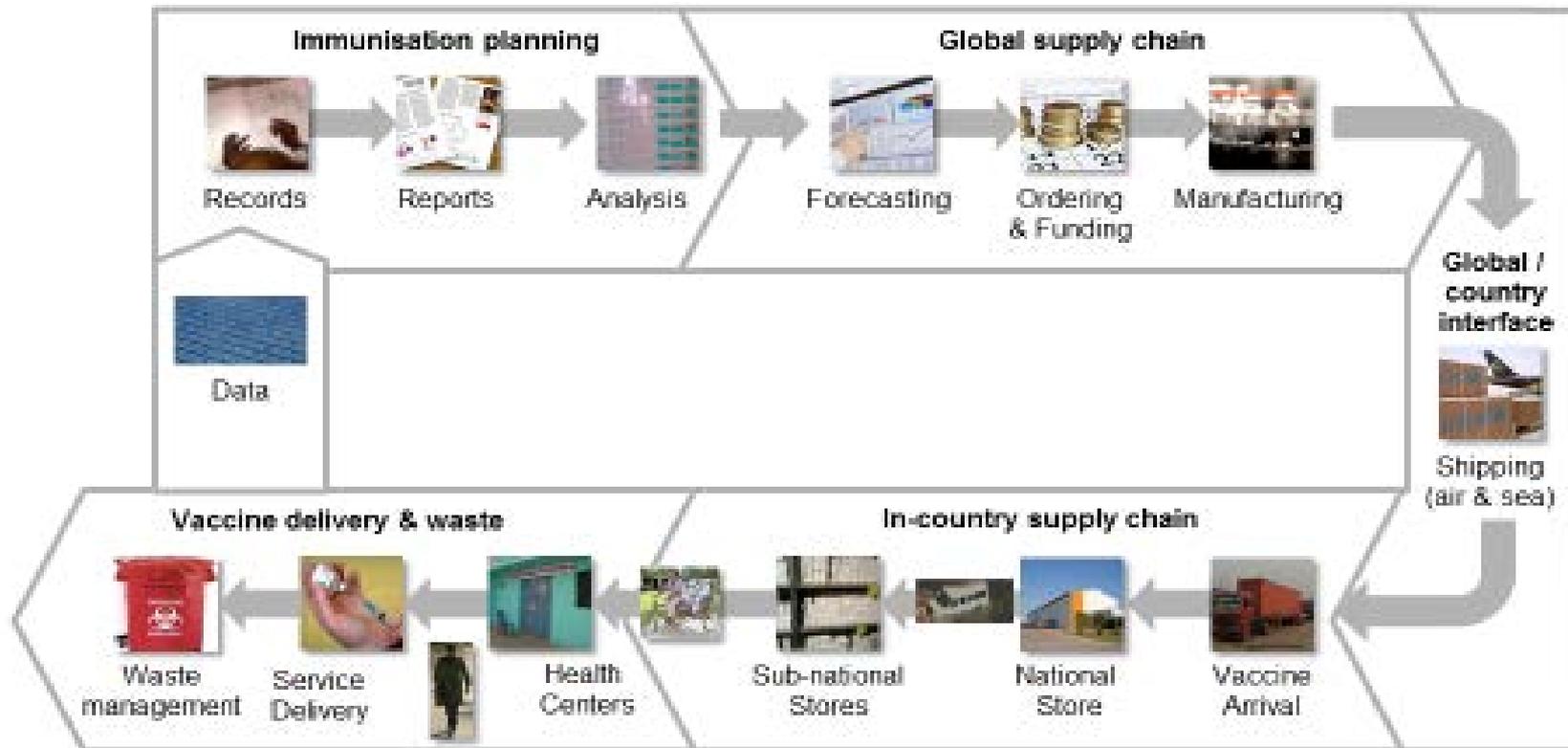
(Ethiopia, Lebanon, Namibia, Solomon Islands,
United Kingdom, USA)



Describing the supply chain

Maturity models:

Ad Hoc, Organized, Integrated, Extended



Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance. The immunization supply chain.

FIP guidelines

'FIP Statement of Policy on Improving Access to Medicines in Developing Countries'

'FIP statement on Ensuring Quality and Safety of Medicinal Products to Protect the Patient'

'FIP statement of policy – the role of the pharmacist in pharmacovigilance'

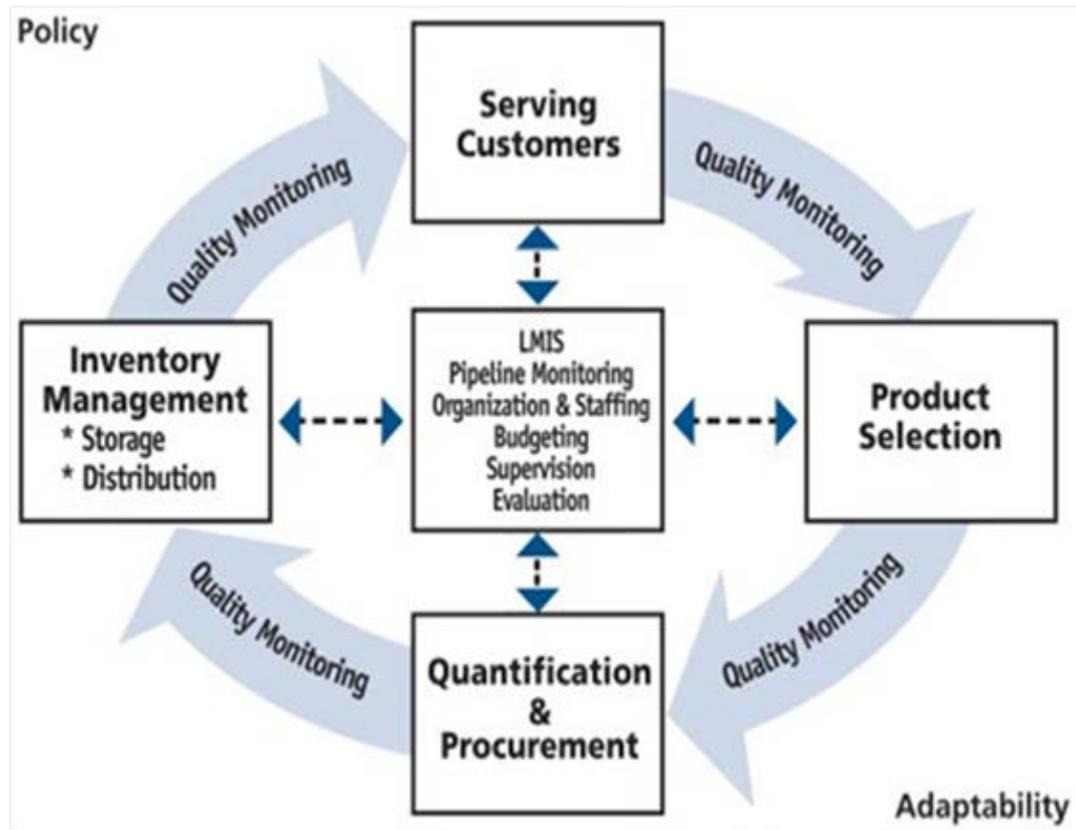
'FIP Good pharmacy practice in developing countries-recommendations for stepwise implementation'

'Joint FIP/WHO guidelines on good pharmacy practice: standards for quality of pharmacy services'

'FIP statement of policy on counterfeit medicines'

All focus on pharmacists in hospital or community practice

Competencies

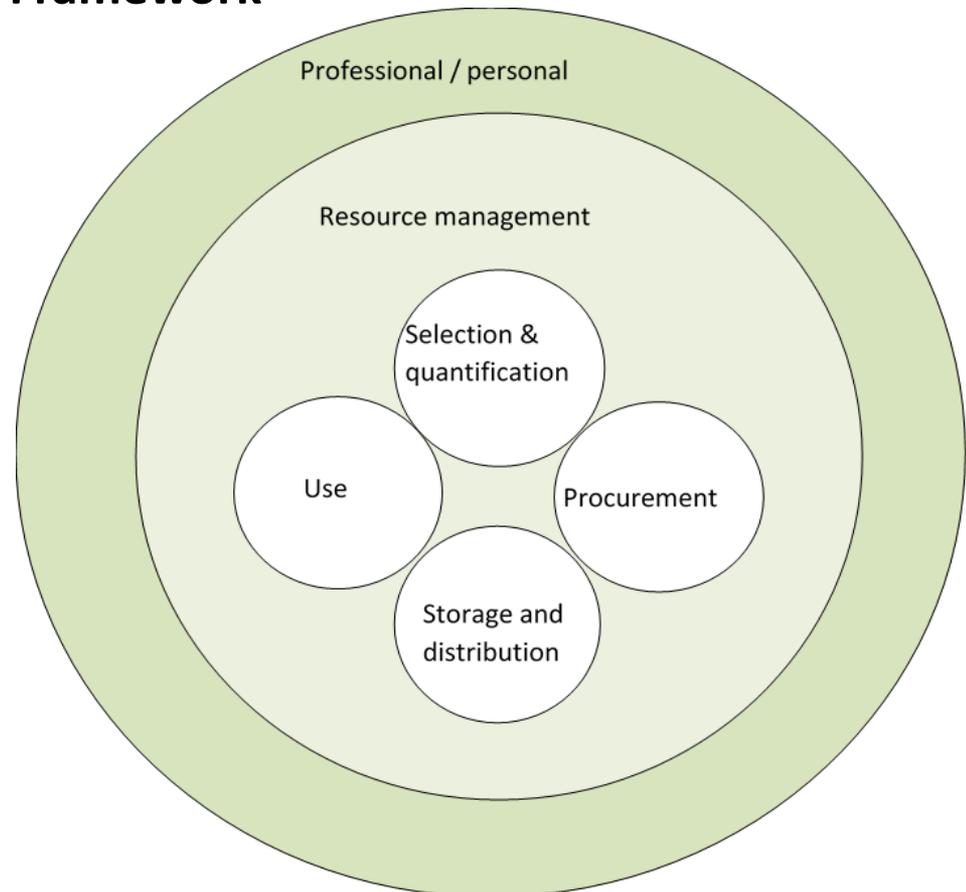


The various activities undertaken in the health supply chain

Competencies

6 domains within the PtD Health Supply Chain Competency Framework for Leaders & Managers

Only 22 of more than 200 behaviours were noted by the WG for the survey as likely.



Survey trends for pharmacists

Is the pharmacist the most suitable cadre to...	All data (N=384)
Advise on product specifications (e.g. active ingredient, form, pharmacopeia standard) for the procurement of medicines	99%
Identify medicines by their generic name, and have a general understanding of what medicines are used for	96%
Describe the principles and processes of category management for medicines (i.e. medicines categorized by similar use or storage needs, such as cold chain, anti-retroviral medicines, controlled substances such as narcotics and psychotropic)	95%
Compound (make a pharmaceutical from base components) under the code of good manufacturing practice (GMP) for the production of medicines	95%
Describe the broad concepts of National Medication Policy , Essential Medicines Lists, Essential Equipment Lists, Standard Treatment Guidelines and "Dangerous Drug (DDA) or narcotics policy	94%

Survey trends for pharmacists

- Pharmacists are more likely to agree that they are the most suitable profession for the competencies identified.
- Non pharmacist logisticians are less likely to agree that pharmacists are the most suitable profession. Respondents from Lower middle to upper middle income countries are more likely to agree than high income countries.
- Agreement that pharmacists are the most suitable profession for these specific supply chain behavioural areas is not universal among any sub groups in the survey but acknowledgment of pharmacists as the medicines expert is clear.
- Clinical behaviours rated higher than supply chain technical areas.

Education

- **Undergraduate** education prepares pharmacists with an understanding of medicines, their **clinical application, quality process** of manufacture and use, but such training does not cover the range of logistics and supply chain competencies
- It is **essential** that **pharmacists** who engage in SCM as a central competency, undertake professional certification and or academic education consistent with SCM functions they undertake.
- The **exact areas of pharmacist engagement** will depend on the **country context** of the **health supply chain** in question, the **legal environment** and the **availability** or otherwise of **other logistics and health cadres**.

Key quotes

‘There are many supply chain tasks associated with those mentioned in this survey that are currently completed by pharmacists yet they could be done by logistics and procurement officers with pharmacists left to play a technical advisory role. This would for example reduce the number of pharmacists required in a typical central medical store to just two to three individuals.’

‘Healthcare Supply Chains are complex but not rocket science. Hence a proper team composition, a well managed and well trained team go a long way in achieving a good supply chain. A pharmacist should take a role in this team and has some specific responsibilities, many of those responsibilities can be delegated and performed by others with the appropriate checks and balances.’

Key messages

The **pharmacist** has the **role of medicines expert**, particularly in the areas of; **product specification, use, compounding, pharmacovigilance and policy.**

The **expertise of pharmacists** as medicines experts is needed as **part of a team** approach to HSC, while noting that **‘entry level pharmacists’** do not have the logistical & SC expertise that may be found in other personnel who specialise in these competencies.

Use the human resources **best suited** for the **SCM competencies you need.** It will probable **NOT** be a **pharmacist.**



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