

Media release

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Pharmacist-led solutions leading the way on World Health Day

The value of involving pharmacists in reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) has been placed front and centre on [World Health Day](#), with the release today of a landmark report highlighting the unique capability and capacity of pharmacists in the prevention, early detection and management of diseases such as diabetes, asthma, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer.

The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP)'s [Beating non-communicable diseases in the community: The contribution of pharmacists](#) – presents initiatives from Australia and 14 countries across Europe, Asia, Africa and North America, encouraging pharmacists around the world – practicing in all settings – to play a more active part in fighting NCDs.

Ms Isabel Jacinto, Chair of FIP's Working Group on Non-communicable Diseases says NCD management is demanding new answers and requiring innovative and creative solutions, many of which could be provided by pharmacists.

'In some countries, lack of access to pharmacists due to workforce shortages is jeopardising the health of patients with NCDs, and the report calls on governments to take action to increase the supply of well-qualified pharmacists.

'This report sets out the global evidence to advocate, nationally and internationally, for an expanded role for pharmacists in NCD management. It also contains recommended actions for national and local associations of pharmacists.'

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 36 million people die annually from non-communicable diseases (NCDs), representing over 60% of deaths worldwide, 15 million of which occur before the age of 70 years.

Deirdre Criddle, SHPA Board Director and Australia's representative on FIP's Working Group on Non-communicable Diseases says while the problem is immense, topline findings were straightforward.

'We concluded that pharmacists' regular interactions with patients can be harnessed to increase prevention of NCDs, ensure responsible use and adherence to medicines, and encourage early referral to General Practitioners to achieve better health outcomes.

'The case studies show pharmacists are able to provide early screening and referral, point-of-care testing and specialised counselling, as well as long-term disease management. However, the authors believe that pharmacists could play an even bigger role in NCDs and need to further align and integrate their work with that of other healthcare professionals.'

In releasing the report, FIP made seven recommendations for Member Organisations and all national and local associations of pharmacists around competency framework development, multidisciplinary collaboration and public health strategies, to harness the evidence and showcase the effectiveness of pharmacists in prevention and control of NCDs.

'In many areas, Australia was seen as a world leader in the early engagement of projects involving pharmacists in NCDs,' says Ms Criddle.

However, as a pharmacist working across care transitions, I believe we can do so much more as a profession for populations and patients at risk. Regardless of your workplace – or indeed your place in the world, pharmacists have a responsibility to raise their voices, increase their advocacy and extend their roles to assist patients at risk of developing or already living with NCDs.'

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for leading pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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