



# 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)**



# SESSION 1

6th May 2021

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# EMPOWERING OUR PHARMACIES AROUND AIR POLLUTION AND RESPIRATORY HEALTH

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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.”**

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

## BREATHE BETTER

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# PHARMACISTS PLAY A UNIQUE ROLE IN RAISING AWARENESS

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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 prioritising needs in pharmacy practice services and support tools**

**Part II: Defining and prioritising 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 such as asthma and COPD.
- Screening for symptoms of the impact of pollution.

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**“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.”**

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

## RAISING AWARENESS

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# PUSHING AIR POLLUTION TO THE TOP OF THE AGENDA

## PART I: PHARMACY PRACTICE SERVICES AND SUPPORT TOOLS

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### • 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 expiratory 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.”**

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**Kristina Billberg,**  
Former President of Swedish  
Pharmacists Association

# BECOMING “BREATHE BETTER” EXPERTS

## PART II: EDUCATION AND TRAINING PATHWAYS FOR PHARMACY TEAM DEVELOPMENT

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- **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. The consideration of air pollution as a core pharmacist function will vastly strengthen the pharmacist’s contribution in disease prevention, in counselling on medication and patient referral when needed”**

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**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.”**

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

**“There is a huge lack of awareness of the health effects 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, positioning the community pharmacy as a ‘Breathe Better’ centre”**

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**Lars-Åke Södertund**  
President, Community Pharmacy  
Section, FIP

# SESSION 2

7th June 2021





# MOBILISING PHARMACISTS TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF AIR POLLUTION ON HEALTH

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Following on from the first roundtable held on May 6, a call to action (CTA) on “**Mobilising pharmacists across our communities in mitigating the impact of air pollution on health**” was drafted and shared with the experts prior to the second meeting. The CTA 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 CTA and to discuss how to implement the recommendations and address any policy barriers.
- To gather consensus around the CTA to support its implementation and adaptation by member organisations and stakeholders.

The event addressed three key areas:

- Practical use of the CTA.
- 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 CALL TO ACTION

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 Member Organizations** 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.

**Professional associations** can promote new professional roles and services and forge interprofessional collaborations for better patient care, thereby increasing the visibility of pharmacists in this area.

### 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 and to generate evidence** of the impact of professional services by pharmacists in this area. This data could be used to illustrate the link between air pollution and respiratory symptoms, and to **advocate for a broader implementation and remuneration of such services 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 healthcare professionals and other stakeholders.

**“In each country, we need to tailor the call to action to the local situation, i.e. to take a global framework and make it relevant at a local level.”**

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

**“Environmental, cultural and social determinants of diseases must also be addressed as risk factors, because in Brazil there is an important part of the population facing all kinds of vulnerability and poverty situations, living in inappropriate places, without ventilation, surrounded by mould and dust inside their homes, also suffering a lot because of air pollution. By considering the impact of pollution on health, we need to broaden our vision, including the ways the goods are produced in our society”**

**Josélia Frade,**  
Brazilian Federal Council  
of Pharmacy

# TAKING ACTION TO ADDRESS HEALTH IMPACT OF AIR POLLUTION

## EXPANDING PHARMACISTS' ROLE IN RELATION TO AIR POLLUTION

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### DRIVING FORWARD

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

- The **FIP Global Pharmaceutical Observatory (GPO)** can collate data, working with FIP member organisations, **which can inform guidelines** locally, regionally, and globally to help pharmacists become better advocates for health interventions to minimize the impact of air pollution.
- **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 impact of air pollution on health

### BARRIERS TO BREAK DOWN

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

- Pharmacists 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 establish **workforce policies that can support the development** of the workforce and mitigate risks such as workforce capacity shortages.
- Pharmacy teams need to have their **skills developed through competency-based training**, utilizing available continuing professional development (CPD) resources.
- 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 in relation to air pollution, but also by 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.”**

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**Isabel Jacinto,**  
Executive Director, National  
Association of Pharmacies, Portugal

# PUTTING WORDS INTO ACTION IN PHARMACY

## PRIORITISING AND PROGRESSING ACTION FOR PHARMACY TEAM DEVELOPMENT

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

- **Creating public awareness** of the risks of air pollution and **ensuring environmental health literacy.**
- **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.
- **Advocating for adequate remuneration** for pharmacists to provide services mitigating the impact of air pollution.
- **Identifying pharmacists** with expertise in air pollution mitigation with in countries **to lead evidence-based advocacy initiatives.**
- **Promoting research into the potential cost savings** that could be made through pharmacy interventions.
- Delivering **interprofessional training courses to support pharmacists** in becoming more proactive about tackling the impact of air pollution on health.
- **Starting early to include** the impact of air pollution as part of the **undergraduate curriculum.**

### INTERNATIONAL CLEAN AIR DAY

The **call to action** will be launched during an online symposium organized by FIP with the support of the TCBI on **7 September, to coincide with the United Nation's International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies.**

**“This must be a collaborative, multidisciplinary effort and we have to raise awareness of this important threat to global health so that we can support people in protecting themselves from the impact of air pollution and breathe better in the future.”**

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**Emilia 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.

**“Thanks to everyone for taking the time to engage in this roundtable. It’s always great to listen to the unified and collective voices on what we can do to drive this call to action forward.”**

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**Robert Friedline**

Chief Executive of the TCBI

# ROUNDTABLE MEMBERS

NAME	AFFILIATION	COUNTRY
<b>FIP Member Experts</b>		
Anna Murphy	Consultant Pharmacist	UK
Aysu Selçuk	Turkish Pharmacists Association	Turkey
Guru Prasad Mohanta	Indian Pharmaceutical Association	India
Isabel Pimenta Jacinto	National Association of Pharmacies of Portugal	Portugal
Job Van Boven	Royal Dutch Pharmacists Association	Netherlands
Jonathan Laird	Publisher, editor and provider of online training, expertise in NCDs, including respiratory	UK
Josélia Frade	Federal Council of Pharmacy	Brazil
Kristina Billberg	FIP expert representative for respiratory health	Sweden
Roza Yagudina	Moscow Pharmaceutical Society	Russia
Sylvia Blind	Royal Dutch Pharmacists Association	Netherlands
Zhao Rong-Sheng	Chinese Pharmaceutical Association	China
<b>FIP Officers</b>		
Ema Paulino	FIP Professional Secretary	Portugal
Lars-Åke Söderlund	President, FIP Community Pharmacy Section	Sweden
Luis Lourenço	Secretary, FIP Community Pharmacy Section	Portugal
Paul Sinclair	Chair of the FIP Board of Pharmaceutical Practice	Australia
Rula Darwish	FIP Co-lead for CPD Strategies, Workforce Development Hub	Jordan
Samira Goussos	FIP Vice President	Jordan
<b>TCBI Team</b>		
Ansa Kpodo	Global Expert Marketing Director GSK & TCBI	Switzerland
Emilio Santoro	Medical Affairs Principal Scientist, Respiratory and Skin Health, Global Category, GSK R&D	UK
Jessica Bobet	Global Expert Lead, Respiratory Category, GSK	Switzerland
Kavita Datar	Senior Healthcare Professional Marketing Manager GSK	UK
Kavita Sud	Global Expert Lead, Partnerships, GSK	UK
Pranab Kalita	Global Category Medical Affairs Lead, Respiratory & Skin Health, GSK	UK
Robert Friedline	CEO, The Clean Breathing Institute and Vice President, R&D Respiratory and Skin Health Category, GSK	Switzerland
<b>FIP Team</b>		
Aniekan Ekpenyong	Practice Transformation Projects Coordinator	Nigeria
Dalia Bajis	Lead for Provision and Partnerships	Australia/Bahrain
Gonçalo Sousa Pinto	Lead for Practice Development and Transformation	Portugal/Spain
Lina Bader	Lead for Workforce Transformation and Development	Jordan/Saudi Arabia
Nilhan Uzman	Lead for Education Policy and Implementation	Turkey
Zuzana Kusynová	Lead for Policy, Practice and Compliance	Slovakia/Netherlands

# BREATHE BETTER TOGETHER.

**12 AUGUST 2021**

**13:00 - 14:30 CEST**

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

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**7 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**13:00 - 14:30 CEST**

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

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This event is a sponsored partnership between FIP and The Clean Breathing Institute, a scientific collaborative initiative of  Consumer Healthcare.

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