

FIP IMPACT DATABASE: ADVANCING SELF-CARE THROUGH PHARMACY



Self-care is the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider (1). Self-care can complement routine health services by filling gaps in access and helping people manage common conditions safely (2).

WHY SELF-CARE MATTERS

Pharmacists, often among the most accessible health professionals, support responsible self-care through advice, safe medicine access and use, and health literacy. This aligns with FIP Development Goal 15 (People-centred care) and 18 (Access to medicines, devices and services) (2).



FIP Development Goal 15 (People-centred care) reflects pharmacists' role in supporting person-centred self-care by helping people make safe decisions, recognise warning signs, and use medicines appropriately.



FIP Development Goal 18 (Access to medicines, devices and services) reflects pharmacists' contribution to access through safe use of medicines and services, and guidance to the right level of care when escalation is needed.

FIP self-care outputs summary (2017-2025)

FIP has produced global resources on pharmacy-supported self-care, including intelligence reports, insight board reports, policy statements, CPD Bites and guidance for practice, education and advocacy.

99 FIP outputs published between 2017 and 2025.

The main focus areas are:

1. Managing common ailments
2. Empowering patient self-care and health literacy
3. Emerging services and digital health

Outputs focus mainly on professional learning and evidence generation: CPD Bites form the largest share (n=60) and reports are the largest share of evidence-generating publications (n=27).

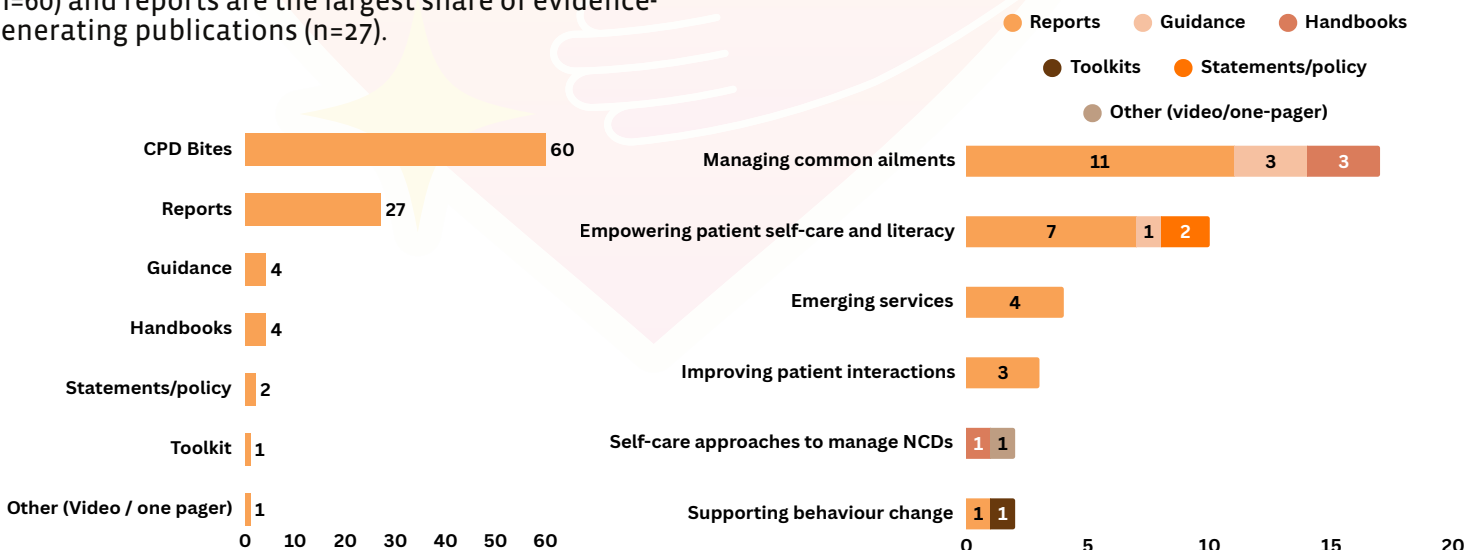


Figure 1: Distribution of FIP outputs by type (n=99)

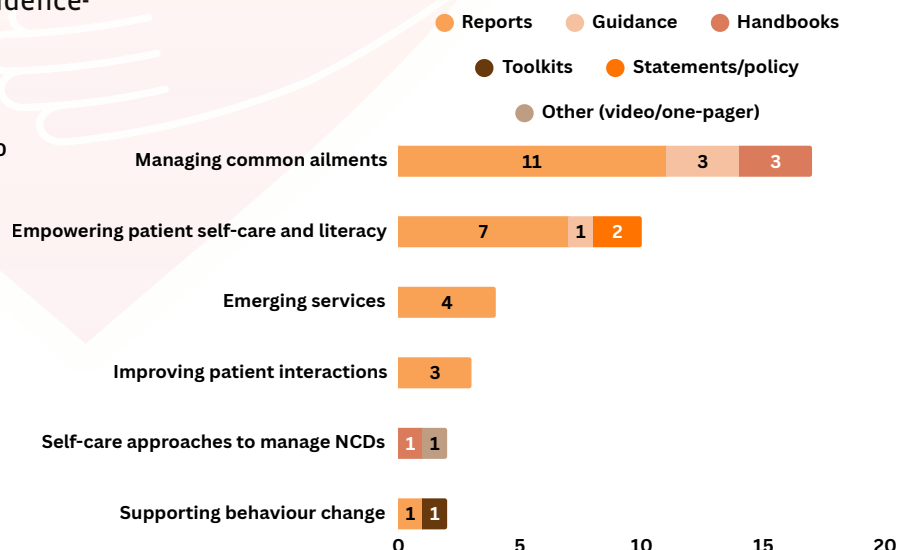


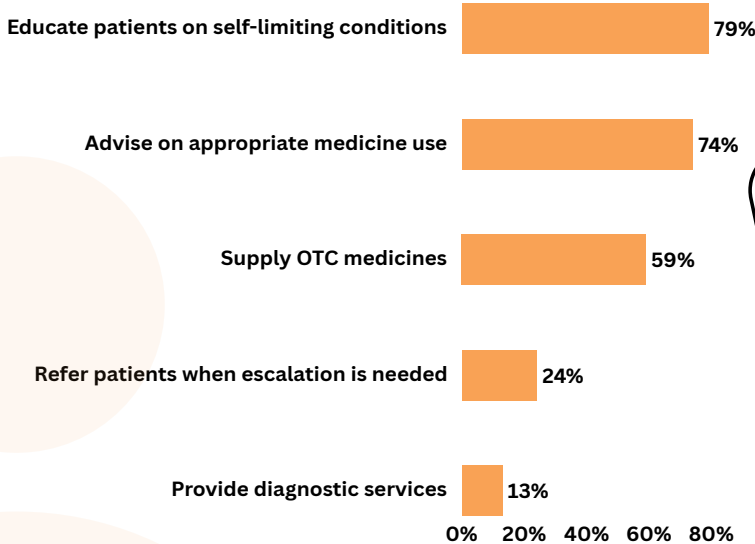
Figure 2: Output types within each theme (breakdown by format; excluding CPD Bites)

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Pharmacists' role in self-care: Key insights from evidence

The FIP multinational self-care needs assessment confirms that pharmacists are already heavily engaged in patient education and support for non-prescription medicines. Nearly 8 in 10 pharmacists report advising patients on self-limiting conditions, positioning pharmacy as a frontline self-care access point (3).



FIP evidence documents pharmacist support in health literacy, preventive care and NCDs across a wide range of areas, some of which include, sore throat, respiratory symptoms, gastrointestinal conditions, pain management, nutrition, sexual health, and natural health products (4-10).



Figure 3: Approaches used to provide self-care support (3)

Barriers and enablers in self-care support

What enables effective self-care support in community pharmacy? (3)



Well-trained and qualified staff



Strong working relationships with other healthcare professionals



Good team working and collaborative care planning



Access to patient health/medication records and private consultation space



Appropriate use of technology to support self-care delivery



Access to educational resources and training

What limits scale and consistency? (3)



Time constraints and heavy workload



Inadequate knowledge/training or lack of access to materials



Insufficient funding and remuneration



Limited patient engagement and role recognition



Limited access to patient medical records



Lack of standardised protocols/guidelines and legislative barriers

Pharmacists' impact through self-care: Key insights from evidence

There is strong evidence of positive health and economic-related outcomes of point-of-care testing (POCT), Common Ailment Scheme (CAS) services and other self-care interventions in community pharmacies, leading to increased health system efficiency and reduced burden on other healthcare sectors which is an important step in universal health coverage (11).

Health-related outcomes

Improving patient outcomes



POCT for infectious diseases and chronic diseases in community pharmacies reduces inappropriate treatment, improves medication safety, enhances chronic disease detection, and strengthens public health surveillance, particularly in underserved communities (11).



The majority of participants in a Canadian study who received Common Ailment Scheme (CAS) services before consulting a doctor (96.8%) reported significant or complete improvement in their conditions after their first visit to a pharmacist (80.8%) (12).

Enabling patient safety and reducing adverse effects



Pharmacists used creatinine POCT to assess kidney function before antibiotic supply, which led to prescription modifications due to renal impairment. This improved antibiotic dose safety in elderly patients and reduced risk of adverse drug events (13).

Economic-related outcomes

Reducing healthcare cost burden



In the Netherlands, implementing renal POCT for patients aged 65 years or older receiving antibiotics resulted in annual savings of EUR 86 per patient through renal POCT dose adjustments (14).



In Canada, community pharmacy-based strep throat POCT across five provinces led to estimated CAD 12.47–24.36 savings per patient, translating to estimated annual savings of CAD 1.3–2.6 million (15).



Recent studies show cost-effective treatment of common ailments by community pharmacies compared to GP visits and emergency department visits. Minor ailment scheme (MAS) in Birmingham, UK resulted in cost savings of GBP 2million (EUR 2.3 million) in 2014, with predicted savings ranging from GBP 12 to GBP 56 million (EUR 14 to 65 million) (16).

Reducing hospital visits/barriers to healthcare access



A community pharmacist-led Group A Streptococcus (GAS) programme in Canada assessed 7,050 patients; 70% received antibiotics in the pharmacy, thereby reducing hospital visits and delivering cost-effective care (17).

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FIP's leadership role in supporting self-care practice

Global advocacy and partnerships

FIP actively promotes pharmacists' role in self-care at a global level.

Self-care Trailblazer Group: FIP was a signatory to an open letter urging UN Member states to strengthen health systems through self-care (19).

World Health Summit advocacy: Through the United for Self-care Coalition, FIP highlighted pharmacists' role in managing common ailments and delivering accessible primary care (19).

Council of Europe (Health literacy): FIP joined as a global ally in launching a practical guide to support decision-makers and health professionals in improving health literacy (19).

Professional development and practical resources

FIP develops tools that pharmacists and Member Organisations can use in everyday practice to support safe triage, OTC selection, counselling, and referral.

- [Empowering Self-Care: A Handbook for Pharmacists](#)
- [Knowledge and Skills Reference Guide for Pharmacists Supporting Self-Care](#)
- [CPD Bites on person-centred management of common ailments](#)

Support to member organisations

FIP has collaborated directly with national organisations to strengthen pharmacy-led services aligned with self-care principles.

Example – Tobacco cessation (Jordan and India):

- Digital and in-person training
- Workforce development
- Support for implementation of cessation services
- Awareness campaigns promoting tools and nicotine replacement therapy

This work supported pharmacists in delivering structured behaviour change services within primary healthcare.

Data-driven informed projects and collaborations

FIP collects and organises evidence on pharmacy services through multinational needs assessments and the **FIP Impact Database (ID)**.

The ID codes and collates FIP outputs and published evidence related to pharmacy services, including self-care. This structured evidence base supports advocacy and policy discussions. Access the FIP Impact Database [here](#).

Evidence at a glance - Summary of FIP publications on self-care

Selected publications are listed below. The full set is available on the [self-care microsite](#).

Intelligence reports



Global intelligence on pharmacy-based self-care interventions, best practices, barriers and enablers

Insight board reports



Expert discussion and recommendations on self-care practices, health literacy and education/training needs

Guidance documents



Practical resources aimed at equipping pharmacists with the necessary tools and knowledge to promote self-care among patients

Statements/policy



Recognises pharmacists' key role in self-care provision and advocates for the recognition and support of pharmacists



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