



PRESS RELEASE

SEMERGEN-SEFAC CONSENSUS

Doctors and pharmacists pool knowledge to tackle digestive diseases

- ***Digestive diseases represent over 30% of Primary Care consultations***
- ***With this in mind, doctors and pharmacists have decided to join forces to provide comprehensive and coordinated patient care***
- ***The result is the First Consensus Document in Digestive Disease (symptoms and treatment), drawn up by the Spanish Society of Primary Care Physicians (SEMERGEN) and the Spanish Society of Community Pharmacy (SEFAC), supported by Almirall.***

Madrid, 5 June 2008. Frequent consultations at pharmacies for stomach disorders and increasing self-medication, mostly without proper diagnosis, are some of the reasons that have pushed pharmacists and primary care physicians (PC) to join forces in an attempt to offer comprehensive and coordinated patient care. The result is the first Consensus Document in Digestive Disease (Symptoms and Treatment) by the Spanish Society of Primary Care Physicians (SEMERGEN) and the Spanish Society of Community Pharmacy (SEFAC), with support from Almirall.

Jesús Gómez, spokesperson for SEFAC Catalonia and Dr. Enrique Peña, from the SEMERGEN National Digestive Disease Group coordinated the document, which focuses on the most common complaints: occasional heartburn, hiatus hernia and peptic ulcer. In each of them the PC professional's task was to define the disease (causes and classification) and describe symptoms and treatment, while the pharmacist focused on guidelines for active dispensing and pharmacotherapeutic follow-up, compiling of medicinal interactions and hygiene and diet advice.

The experts used the most recent scientific publications and latest consensus documents for the text, such as that of Montreal 2007, based on gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

"Patients with stomach problems usually go to the pharmacy on the appearance of the first symptoms, which are normally heartburn, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, constipation, flatulence or a combination of all of them, and which they do not consider serious enough to go to a PC physician. At the pharmacy the risk of a serious disease requiring medical attention can be detected", affirms Dr. Peña. "It is important that this professional makes an assessment of the patient by asking questions aimed at detecting the problem and later on recommending that they consult their PC physician or dispensing a drug that is effective in treating the disorder", he adds.

Jesús Gomez stresses that the need for pharmacists to exchange opinions to achieve better patient medical and pharmacy care arises from the fact that "digestive disease is one of the most common consultations in pharmacies and we also receive a lot of medical prescriptions for this kind of complaint and how to prevent it". "Also, he adds, in



digestive diseases quite often the patient self-medicates and it is important to have clear and appropriate action criteria”

The need for a Consensus Document

The objective of José Ibáñez, president of the Spanish Society of Community Pharmacy (SEFAC) and Nuria Fernández de Cano, head of Working Groups and Residents and Interns of the Spanish Society of Primary Care Physicians (SEMERGEN), representing SEMERGEN and SEFAC at the press conference, is to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency in patient treatment through a joint approach.

“SEFAC is very proud of this document for two main reasons: firstly because it is a new tool written and given out to aid the pharmacist in day- to- day care, that is, tackling various symptoms and/or health problems, in this case stomach disorders, which are among the most common in pharmacies. Secondly, because a consensus has been reached between pharmacists and primary care physicians to establish common action criteria in pursuit of the same objective: patient health”, explained Ibáñez. “Helping the pharmacist to further his/her commitment to the health of patients who take medicines, he added, is one of the aims of SEFAC and the instigating of a document of this kind is a good way to fulfil the objective in a practical manner”.

Nuria Fernández de Cano also pointed out that “SEMERGEN, as a scientific society comprising PC physicians, has the principal aim of improving health care for people. Collaboration, therefore, between pharmacists and PC physicians is fundamental for achieving the common goal of benefiting patients by curing a disease or relieving symptoms”

Juan Heras, Medical Director in Spain of Almirall, a company that has provided backing to the Consensus Document, indicated that “Almirall’s commitment to digestive diseases goes beyond our historical trajectory in research in this area (with drugs such as *Almax* (almagate), *Opiren* (lansoprazol), *Flatoril* (cleboprida+simeticona), *Cleboril* (clebopride) and *Cidine* (cinitapride)”. “This is why, he added, we were delighted to participate in this collaboration between physicians and pharmacists as a therapeutic strategy to the benefit of patients because seeking better solutions is part of our philosophy”.

Almirall

Almirall, an international pharmaceutical company based on innovation and committed to health, headquartered in Barcelona, Spain, researches, develops, manufactures and commercialises its own R&D and licensed drugs with the aim of improving people’s health and wellbeing.



The therapeutic areas on which Almirall focuses its research resources are related to the treatment of asthma, COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis.

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