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Home care services a growing part of wholesale drug distribution - GIRP
by Helen Collis

CANNES, June 7 (APM) - Providing a holistic home-care distribution service will become a major part of the drug distribution service in the future, a wholesaler conference heard on Monday.

Adel Al-Saleh, president of IMS Health Europe, Middle East & Africa, told the GIRP annual meeting in Cannes, that up to \$53 billion of growth could come from new emerging technologies, such as patient interventions.

As an example, Al-Saleh said patients with diseases such as multiple sclerosis, require rehabilitation, help in getting medication and help with basic needs in life.

"These are areas where the companies are thinking of promoting a total solution instead of just a drug... that includes physical support in terms of rehabilitation and exercise. This is happening today," he said.

UK AHEAD OF GAME

The conference later heard from Per Troein, vice president strategic partners at IMS Health Europe, Middle East & Africa, who said that the Netherlands, UK and Switzerland were 'ahead of the game' in providing home care solutions - with the UK leading the way.

He said the service could also reach many other markets. "It's may be as simple as having a vendor who has a total responsibility for both the performance (of the drug) and the servicing," he said.

However, Troein did raise one potential issue - keeping track of a drug's performance where a patient access scheme states it will be provided for free or stopped if it does not work. "That's when it becomes utterly important to measure those things in a consistent way," he said.

Troein also said that the provision of home care services would likely need to be re-branded in order to be accepted and successful - to distinguish the service from a simple wholesale distribution service.

CARE COLLABORATIONS

Director general of GIRP, Monika Derecque-Pois, told a press conference earlier that patient care collaborations were now something they were looking at.

"None of the stakeholders alone could manage these changes," she said, adding that they were beginning to look more at payers as future clients, patient-centred care collaborations with other supply chains and, in the future, the supply of personalised medicines.

Earlier in the day, the conference also heard from Danielle Golinelli, deputy director of France's Department for Health Products and Health Practice at the Ministry of Health, who said a shift towards developments in home care supply will be seen more in the future.

She said: "For local pharmacists there's an opportunity to respond to this. Such adjustment to distribution will have an impact on the wholesale network for the next few years." However, Golinelli did not explain how.

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