

Military Pharmacy in the German Armed Forces and the COVID-19 pandemic – task and experience in cross-functional and cross-departmental collaboration

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The first cases of pneumonia of unknown aetiology were reported from Hubei province in China at the end of 2019. About six weeks later, more than 60,000 cases were registered worldwide. As a result, the virus spread rapidly and is still a challenge for health authorities worldwide in 2022. Since the early days of the pandemic, the Bundeswehr Medical Service has been, and still remains strongly involved in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic by both, supporting the health authority boards and fulfilling the duties for the German Armed Forces. Right from the beginning of the pandemic, military pharmacists had to cope with different aspects of the corona crisis. Their service was required in all different areas of the Bundeswehr Medical Service especially in the Medical Service Operations Support Coordination Centre at Bundeswehr Medical Service Headquarters, in the practical pharmaceutical areas and for the first time in the coordination centre of the Federal Ministry of Health. The spectrum ranges from classic pharmaceutical activities like large-scale manufacturing of medicinal products to extensive procurement of medicines, disinfectants, biocides, medical products, medical devices and personal protective equipment to the on-demand and proper provision and distribution of the aforementioned materiel. In addition, pharmacists were assigned to work in the new established coordination centre of the Federal Ministry of Health. and deeply involved in epidemiological evaluations, responsible for the daily COVID-19 report for the Federal Government as well as the strategic planning of the COVID-19 vaccines logistics. During the pandemic, strategic planning of the vaccine logistics in cross-departmental collaboration was a main task of the pharmacists. Furthermore, the German national logistic hub for COVID-19 vaccines was located at a military pharmacy and military pharmacists were responsible for the distribution of all kind of COVID-19 vaccines to the pharmaceutical wholesalers and part of the biggest vaccination campaign. Cross-

functional and cross-departmental collaboration was a big success in the COVID-19 pandemic and military pharmacist were able to make an important contribution during the fight against the SARS-CoV-2 virus on strategic and operational level.