



# Review of Activities of Estonian Pharmacies in 2006

Based on the type of their operation, pharmacies may be divided into three categories: general pharmacies, hospital pharmacies and veterinary pharmacies.

Considering the activities of the pharmacies, it must be taken into account that 2006 was the first year when a restriction was imposed on the foundation of new general pharmacies in towns. As from 1 January 2006 a new pharmacy may not be founded in towns which have less than 3000 inhabitants per pharmacy, or in the rural area in case there already is a pharmacy within the 1 km radius.

At the beginning of 2006 there were 328 general pharmacies (with a total of 204 structural units), 25 hospital pharmacies (plus 4 structural units) and 10 veterinary pharmacies (plus 1 structural unit). One-fourth of all the general pharmacies were situated in Tallinn and 35% of the structural units of the general pharmacies were also situated in bigger cities – Tallinn and Tartu. Seven out of the 29 hospital pharmacies were situated in Tallinn, 3 in Harju County, 3 in Eastern Viru County and 3 in Tartu. Each of the other counties had only 1 hospital pharmacy, with the exception of Valga and Võru Counties, which had no hospital pharmacies. In 2006, there were 11 veterinary pharmacies in Estonia, including one structural unit.

The total turnover of pharmacies is made up of the sale of medicinal products and other goods (medical devices, food supplements, herbal products, cosmetics and others). The gross turnover of all the active pharmacies and their structural units was 3415 million kroons in 2006. Of that, the turnover of general pharmacies constituted 80% or 2789 million kroons, the turnover of hospital pharmacies was 17,8% or 607 million kroons, and the veterinary pharmacies had the smallest share in the total turnover – 19 million kroons or less than 1%. Compared to the results of the year 2005, the turnover of the general pharmacies and hospital pharmacies increased by 13% and 19% respectively in 2006, while the turnover of veterinary pharmacies decreased by 24%.

	Turnover of medicinal products	% out of the total turnover
General pharmacies	2224	80
Hospital pharmacies	368	61
Veterinary pharmacies	8	42

The sale of prescription medicines may be divided into the sale of reimbursed and non-reimbursed medicinal products. On an average, reimbursed medicinal products make up 90% of the sale of prescription medicines. 37% of the cost of reimbursed medicinal products were paid by patients and an average of 63% by the Estonian Health Insurance Fund in 2006. During the past few years, the ration has remained stable, i.e. the patient pays approximately 1/3 and the Estonian Health Insurance Fund approximately 2/3 of the price of reimbursed medicines.

As a result of the increase in the sale of medicinal products over the years, the expenditure of patients on medicines has also increased. The increase in the expenditure was approximately 24% over the years. Thus, last year, every inhabitant of Estonia spent an average of 78 kroons per month on medicinal products. During the year, each inhabitant's own expenditure on medicines was just under 1000 kroons, or 936 kroons to be exact.

At the end of 2006, Estonian general pharmacies (incl. their structural units) employed 808 registered pharmacists, 554 assistant pharmacists and 516 other employees. A medium-sized general pharmacy has a registered pharmacist, an assistant pharmacist and an employee in other capacity. Hospital pharmacies employed 68 registered pharmacists, 26 pharmacy technicians and 36 people in other positions. A medium-sized hospital pharmacy has a staff of five people, while only a few bigger hospital pharmacies and those having structural units, employ more people. Veterinary doctors are mainly employed in veterinary pharmacies. Eleven active veterinary pharmacies employed 13 veterinary doctors and 5 other employees in 2006.

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