

pharMe – Evaluating a digital tool for emergency contraception counselling

Esther Spinatsch, Sabrina Zelger, Prof. Samuel S. Allemann; Pharmaceutical Care Research Group, University of Basel

Aim

To assess client satisfaction and key counselling metrics related to the use of pharMe, a digital counselling tool (**Figure 1**) for emergency contraception in Swiss pharmacies.

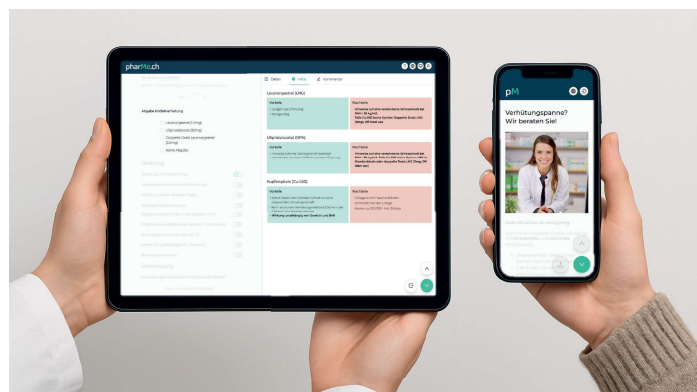


Figure 1: Pharmacist and client view of pharMe

Methods

- Cross-sectional pilot study in pharmacies in German- and French-speaking Switzerland.
- After receiving pharMe-supported emergency contraception counselling, all customers were invited to participate in an anonymous online survey.
- Counselling data were analysed descriptively and compared with historical paper-based processes.
- The ongoing survey started in February 2024, and preliminary results up to June 2025 have been analysed.

Discussion and Conclusion

- Preliminary results indicate that pharMe is feasible in daily pharmacy practice and well accepted by clients.
- The tool improves privacy and efficiency, supports high-quality counselling and client knowledge gain, and enables structured data collection.
- Broader use and expansion to other services such as vaccination and erectile dysfunction could strengthen pharmacies as accessible healthcare providers.

Literature

1. IQVIA Switzerland. Sales data for UPA and LNG. Rotkreuz (Switzerland): IQVIA Switzerland; 2017
2. Spinatsch E, Schwitter C, Kälin J, Allemann SS. (2025). Emergency contraception in Swiss pharmacies – clients' experiences and needs. The European Journal of Contraception & Reproductive Health Care, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13625187.2025.2538534>
3. Schwitter C. Master's thesis (unpublished Data), University of Basel, 2022.

Background

- With around 100,000 supplies per year, emergency contraception (EC) is a key pharmacy service in Switzerland.¹
- Mandatory pharmacist counselling varies between pharmacies and pharmacists, leading to inconsistent quality and limited privacy.²
- Paper-based documentation and archiving are time- and space-consuming.
- We developed pharMe, a web-based digital tool for private self-assessment, structured and evidence-based counselling, and easy documentation.

Results

- We analysed data from 2,237 consultations in 10 pharmacies and 137 client surveys (response rate 6.1%).
- The median counselling time using pharMe was 5.0 minutes (paper-based protocol: 12.7 minutes³).
- Main reasons for EC were condom failure (52%) and no contraception (40%); ulipristal acetate was supplied in 73%, levonorgestrel in 24% of cases.
- Most clients were highly satisfied with pharMe, while only few reported any disturbance or discomfort during counselling (**Figure 2**).
- If EC was needed again, 82% would prefer pharMe to a paper protocol, while 16% had no preference.

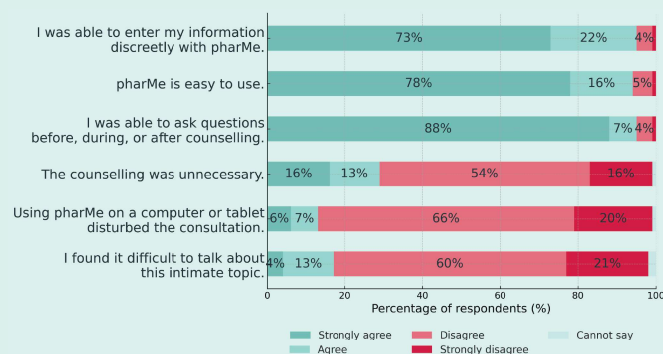


Figure 2: Client opinions on pharMe counselling (n = 115)



Esther Spinatsch

esther.spinatsch@unibas.ch
Pharmaceutical Care Research Group, University of Basel
Klingelbergstrasse 61, 4056 Basel, Switzerland
www.pharmacare.unibas.ch



LinkedIn

Poster-Nr: OP2/R-TIC-51