

# Development of a Protocol Using the Delphi Method for the ad interim Supply of Hormonal Contraceptives in Swiss Pharmacies

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## Abstract

**Background:** Pharmacists are often challenged with situations where women are already on hormonal contraceptives (HC) but have no valid prescription. By Swiss law, pharmacists are allowed to supply prescription-only drugs in exceptional situations without a physician's prescription. Because eligibility for HC can change, women at risk for complications, such as serious side effects, need to be identified. We aimed to develop a protocol to assist pharmacists in clarifying and documenting eligibility for HC.

**Methods:** We conducted a survey using the Delphi method to identify relevant clarifications and develop a protocol for pharmacists. Proposed material was created based on the literature and existing toolkits/protocols aimed at verifying eligibility for HC. A multidisciplinary expert panel, consisting of gynecologists and pharmacists, reviewed the proposed material and provided anonymized feedback over two survey cycles.

**Results:** This Delphi survey revealed items essential to the clarification of eligibility for HC in pharmacies for women who are already using it. This resulted in a protocol that maps "best practices" regarding these ad interim supplies of HC given without a prescription in Switzerland.

**Conclusions:** This survey, made using the Delphi method, allowed us to create a protocol for pharmacists that aims to verify and document eligibility for HC in Switzerland, where HC is frequently supplied without a prescription.

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