

## Vitamin D: Call for Evidence

### Royal Pharmaceutical Society Submission

Pharmacists have a significant role to play in raising awareness of the importance of vitamin D with patients and members of the public and supporting them to take it.

#### **Raising awareness.:**

Pharmacists in primary care, particularly those working in community pharmacies, can promote the need to take vitamin D to the wider general public throughout the winter months. This can be done via promotional material, supplied locally or nationally, as well as via individual conversations with people coming into the pharmacy. Pharmacists, and members of the pharmacy team, can provide advice on sunlight exposure and getting the balance right between protecting the skin and getting enough sun. Pharmacies are often the first point of contact with the health service for a number of people so it is important that pharmacy is included in any schemes to promote the use of vitamin D.

#### **Identifying people at risk of Vitamin D deficiency:**

Certain groups of people may be at an increased risk of vitamin D deficiency. Community pharmacies are easily accessible and are present in areas where there are large populations of ethnic groups who are more at risk of vitamin D deficiency. Using community pharmacies to spread the message about the importance of vitamin D amongst the BAME population could increase uptake.

#### **Supporting National Schemes and messaging:**

Pharmacists work in a variety of health and care settings and can support and raise awareness of the national messages around Vitamin D and the need to take a supplement. Pharmacists can ensure those people who are eligible are aware of the 'Healthy Start' scheme and can access the supplements via this route.

#### **Education for healthcare professionals:**

All healthcare professionals have a role to play in ensuring the general population are aware of the need to take vitamin D throughout the winter months. NHSE/I or OHID should provide national online training and education for all healthcare professionals to ensure a consistent message is being relayed. This should be supported by adequate resources to enable individual healthcare professionals to undertake the training.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) is the professional body for pharmacists in Great Britain. We are the only body that represents all sectors of pharmacy in Great Britain. The RPS leads and supports the development of the pharmacy profession including the advancement of science, practice, education and knowledge in pharmacy. In addition, we promote the profession's policies and views to a range of external stakeholders in several different forums.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Govind". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent underline.

Thorrhun Govind

Chair, English Pharmacy Board

Royal Pharmaceutical Society