

An excerpt from:

Better Health & Social Care: How are Co-ops & Mutuels Boosting Innovation & Access Worldwide?

An International survey of co-ops and mutuals at work in the health and social care sector (CMHSC14)

Volume 2: National Cases

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Montréal, Québec, Canada

For the research framework, the analysis of the national cases, and other research components, including a description of the research team members, refer to Volume 1: Report.

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PHARMACY COOPERATIVES¹

In Turkey, pharmacy cooperatives are well developed. Pharmacy constitutes the unique activity of cooperatives within the health and social care sectors. In the late 1970s, a time when economic conditions became very serious, Turkish drug supplies were heavily dependent on overseas sources. Commercial wholesalers acted arbitrarily, and put pharmacists at risk of having to close their places of business. To safeguard their pharmacies, some of them organized themselves as cooperatives.

Nowadays, the **Association of All Pharmacists Cooperatives (TEKB)**, founded in 1989, is the meta-association of the country's pharmacist cooperatives. TEKB aims at tracking and responding to all events and developments in the global and Turkish industry. It takes actions which encourage the development of cooperatives and their membership bases. It also implements projects and programmes in the realm of pharmaceuticals and pharmaceutics, thus providing the pharmaceutical and health industries with new products and services.

Under TEKB, five wholesaler pharmacist cooperatives serve 13,000 pharmacies across the country: Bursa Pharma.Coop. (1979), Çekoop Pharma. Coop. (2010), Edak Pharma. Coop. (1979), Güney Pharma. Coop. (1989), and Istanbul Pharma. Coop. (1989).

TEKB has designed three main services:

- **The Farmaofis Service** involves products to meet the office supply and equipment needs of the TEKB and its member pharmacy cooperatives. Thanks to this service pharmacies can readily secure office materials to facilitate their operations and to relieve their busy agendas.
- **Farmavizyon** - TEKB organizes a pharmaceutical fair every year in order to help pharmacists to keep up with events and developments in the global as well as in the Turkish pharmaceutical industry. In this venue, they can examine new products, projects, and activities regarding all aspects of the industry, and contribute to the development of cooperative membership bases. The Farmavizyon Pharmaceutical Fair aims to convene participants who share the ethical values of the health industry and are committed to introducing them to colleagues. In addition to pharmacist cooperatives, the trade fair is supported by other pharmacist organizations and the Chambers of Pharmacists (the professional pharmacist associations).
- **Farmayakit** is a service which offers advantages to TEKB members when they use the fuel products of British Petroleum (BP). It uses the combined the power of pharmacist cooperatives, arising from consumption, to leverage advantages for the members in terms of fuel supplies. In return, BP Taşımatik enjoys particular advantages when accessing the

services of member pharmacists. Farmayakit, grounded in a signed agreement between TEKB and BP, is a service available exclusively to the cooperative's member pharmacists.

"We now have a network of 13,000 pharmacies all over Turkey providing jobs to 40,000 people. Our reputation comes from the quality of our service, especially when delivering drugs that are urgently needed," explained Abdullah Özyiğit, the head of TEKB.²

Population (in thousands): 73,997

Population median age (years): 29.04

Population under 15 (%): 26.0

Population over 60 (%): 10.56

Total expenditure on health as a % of Gross Domestic Product: 6.3

General government expenditure on health as a % of total government expenditure: 12.8

Private expenditure on health as a % of total expenditure: 26.1

Pharmacy Cooperatives Data

Number of cooperatives	5
Types of service	Providing drugs
Workers	Over 40,000
Facilities	Pharmacies (13,000)
Annual turnover	N/A

The mission of pharmacy cooperatives is:

- To modernize the drug procurement and supply service, which is the primary requirement of the members (the pharmacists).

- To carry out new service projects in line with the mission of and in cooperation with TEKB.
- To provide the members with new services, to increase their efficiency and to generate new resources for reinvestment in the membership.
- To make the cooperative member pharmacies the first choice of end users.
- To allocate the additional resources obtained from projects to realize new service designs in line with technological, financial, organizational, and administrative regulations.

Pharmacist cooperatives are governed by such principles as:

- Equal Participation: Each member/partner has a single vote and equal rights to elect and be elected.
- Transparency and Independent Audit: Pharmacist cooperatives are audited every year by independent audit companies.
- Dividend: The cooperatives distribute the difference between annual income and expenditure as a dividend to the partners according to the proportion of their purchases (as per the Cooperation Law and the Articles of Association).

SOURCES

¹ For more details on pharmacy cooperatives in Turkey, consult: Association of All Pharmacists Cooperatives (TEKB). 2014. Website. Retrieved April 14, 2014 (<http://www.tekb.org.tr/english/index.php?p=home>).

² International Labour Organization. 2012. "Healing Pharmacies." *ILO News*, November 12. Retrieved April 14, 2014 (http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_192935/lang-en/index.htm).