

## How to counteract incivility of care consumers?

**Speakers:** Gilles BONNEFOND, Former President, USPO | France; Vincent TERRENOIR, Police Commissioner-General, delegate for general security and in charge of National Monitoring Centre for Violence in the Health Sector – ONVS Ministry of Health and Prevention - Directorate General for Care Provision - DGOS | France; Danielle VACHER, President French Advocacy Association to Defend Rheumatoid Arthritis - ANDAR | France

**Led by:** Frédéric THOMAS, Partner, Roland Berger | France

Reported to the National Observatory on Violence in Health Care (ONVS), incivilities correspond to asocial behaviours which do not respect the rules of decorum: wanting to overtake others while queuing, adopting an offensive language... These issues may be difficult to define in criminal matters.

Some triggers lead to acts of violence:

Marginal behaviours linked to psychiatric or psychological disorders

Frustration of the patients, which leads them to express discontent and go beyond civic behaviour. It is often related to a combination of factors such as anguish, anxiety, pain, or drunkenness, which add to the patient's growing impatience.

### Violence is not random

Healthcare professionals, and more particularly women, are the most affected by acts of violence. The latter mostly take place at night, when patients' anxiety and intoxication are heightened. Violent acts can be motivated by several reasons. In pharmacies or in private practices, the outbreak of incivility is generally linked to a refusal to dispense medicines, to falsifications of medical prescriptions or to stock shortages. Moreover, the unavailability of physicians may encourage such behaviours. Indeed, setting up an appointment is sometimes difficult. There are numerous refusals, long waiting times and inconvenient dates and location of consultation for patients. These factors, combined with on-site waiting, create tension, or even anxiety among patients with urgent appointments as well as those with chronic diseases. This can lead to aggressive behaviours and overall intolerance of patients as they are becoming increasingly impatient.

### Predictive and preventive measures to limit incivility and its consequences

Preventive actions must be implemented in healthcare facilities receiving patients:

- Inform patient of waiting times beforehand.
- Train caregivers to handle emotional and violent situations.
- Involve patients in the training of caregivers so that they raise the latter's awareness on their pathology, their feelings, and the doctor-patient relationship.

Identifying and lessening stress factors is necessary to improve the caregiver-patient relationship.

For instance, the following measures have proven to be effective:

- Strengthening pair working between physicians and pharmacists or pharmacists and nurses, who are the main players in the healthcare pathway. The pharmacy is not a place of consumption but a place of care where one obtains a drug after receiving a doctor's prescription.
- Extending expired medical prescriptions for stable patients on regular treatment while they wait for a medical appointment for a renewal of their prescription
- Simplifying the rules of medical prescription as there are over 50 types of prescriptions.
- Improving access to care by reducing waiting time for scheduling appointments.

In hospitals, security guards and security gates are implemented to protect caregivers and other patients from incivility. Some wards may have "warning buttons" at their disposal to alert the staff if a patient misbehaves. In some more extreme cases, physical and chemical restraint methods may be used.