

BULGARIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION VI NATIONAL CONGRESS



Sofia, November 24-25, 2023



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HEALTHCARE POLICIES

ROUND TABLE

International Health Financing Policies and Models

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International Health Financing Policies and Models



The Role of Private Healthcare in Europe: Issues and
Perspectives

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Conflicts of Interest

There are not any conflicts of interest

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The Role of Private Healthcare in Europe: Issues and Perspectives

- Private practice practitioners are a large part of all medical workforce in Europe
- They face specific issues, related to their professional activity
- Data is necessary in order to depict these issues and proceed to necessary actions
- The above issues are of high importance for UEMS and all the European Medical Organizations (EMOs)
- **INSUCOPP**: Maybe the first attempt to present them and plan the way to resolve them



INSUCOPP

In Support of Colleagues in Private Practice

- Dr Andreas Papandroudīs
- Dr Marc Hermans

UEMS Vice Presidents



INSUCOPP SURVEY

- COVID-19 pandemic: a huge strain on all health care workers in various ways
- Medical task force spent major attention to severely ill patients
- Focus of interest has been put mainly on hospitals, less on general practitioners and far less on medical specialists in private practice.



INSUCOPP SURVEY

- **Aim:**
 - UEMS EEC wanted to obtain adequate information about practicing conditions for colleagues from all specialties working in a private practice context
 - Permanent (pre-covid) and covid-19 related issues
 - A survey was scheduled and distributed to all NMAs and UEMS Sections



RESULTS – CONCLUSIONS

PERMANENT (PRE-COVID) ISSUES

- **Postgraduate training with regard to practicing in private**
- **Conclusion:** Possibility for gaining experience in some form of PP during specialty training.
- However, this is not compulsory in most of the cases. It is up to the candidate/trainee.



Installing necessary equipment for practicing

- **Installing the necessary equipment for practicing**
- **Conclusion:** In the vast majority (> 90 %) **no funding** to doctors in PP for obtaining specialized equipment.
- No specific funding projects, either domestic or from EU.
- Very few cases with such projects, mainly general projects with other professionals. Doctors are judged according to criteria applied to all professionals, some of them may not apply to them.



Continuous Medical Education

- **Financial support for attending scientific events**
- **Conclusion:** No financial support for loss of income during absence.
- In majority of cases, no financial support for subscription fees, travel or lodging costs. Definitely no support by the state or the insurance system.
- When there is a such a contribution, it comes, almost always, from pharmaceutical industry. It is judged on an individual basis with personal arrangements



Private practice aspects in scientific events

- **Conclusion:** Generally, scientific events rarely or almost never consider PP aspects and when this is the case, it takes place partly in the event.



Fellowships for physicians practicing in private practice

- **Conclusion:** A clear conclusion to this issue-question, from all countries and in all specialties:
- **Fellowships for doctors in PP practically do not exist**
- **No legal status** or a legally regulating procedure for doctors in PP to have a fellowship (sub-specialization) in a public hospital.
- Such fellowships go mainly/normally to hospital doctors. Candidates from PP, additionally, experience difficulties in finding a training centre.



CME activities in public hospitals

- **Conclusion:** The majority of participants declare that PP doctors can be involved in CME activities and in scientific research in hospitals.
- However, there is a minority (38%) who say that this does not happen and there is a possibility that this is what it really happens.
- Probably, it is decided on an individual basis and there is not a general invitation to all doctors in PP to participate in such activities in the hospitals.



COVID – 19 RELATED ASPECTS

Problems noticed

- **Logistics**: the majority of respondents experienced at least temporarily imposed restrictions, partly by official regulations, partly due to a lack of personal protective materials and necessary adjustments to consultation room arrangements, in particular at the beginning of the pandemic.
- **Telephone and video consultation** became quickly adopted



COVID – 19 RELATED ASPECTS

Problems noticed

- **Significant downsized workload** was noticed among all specialties, in particular within surgical specialties (up to 80 %).
- Urgencies could always be seen, but within fixed time slots



COVID – 19 RELATED ASPECTS

Effects in patient care

- **Work stress significantly increased** due to additional tasks, protective tasks, being exposed to danger and the shortage of protective materials
- **Patient care** in general was **negatively affected** by less face to face contact with patients, discomfort with videoconsultations, limited time available to spend for a particular patient.



COVID – 19 RELATED ASPECTS

Effects in patient care

- COVID-protocols could lead to **misdiagnosis, postponed diagnosis** of severe diseases, with possible results more severe cases and more expensive treatments.
- Preventive medicine many times has been overlooked.



Doctors' health and CPD activities

- With regard to one's own health very few answers have been collected.
- Probably “a secondary rank problem”, an issue many of our colleagues spend less attention on in times of crisis.
- With regard to CPD related activities, respondents noticed a steep decrease but with a swift shift towards on line activities such as webinars, later also congresses.
- COVID-related webinars were imposed or strongly advised.



INSUCOPP – SUGGESTIONS PERMANENT PROBLEMS

- **Educational programs** to include experience in private practice
- **Funding** from EU and National Sources should be given to Doctors in PP **for obtaining specialized equipment** and for other professional investments in their working place.
- Such funding projects, should be exclusively for doctors in PP who would be judged for eligibility under criteria applied only to doctors.
- These projects, should run normally every year in all European countries



INSUCOPP – SUGGESTIONS PERMANENT PROBLEMS

- **CME: Financial support** to doctors in PP, when doctor attends scientific events: for loss of income, subscription fees, travelling and lodging costs.
- Support could come from EU funds and projects and should be applied to all European countries – members of EU.
- All these would increase the number of doctors in PP who attend scientific events and enhance their scientific level and consequently quality of patient care.



SUGGESTIONS – PERMANENT PROBLEMS

- National Scientific Societies and all scientific event organizers, to **include PP aspects in the scientific program of the events.**
- An invitation to doctors in PP to participate as speakers or instructors in the event, should be also a measure that would enhance their participation and attendance.



SUGGESTIONS PERMANENT PROBLEMS

- All European Union countries, should change their legislation, so as **doctors in PP to have same opportunities** as hospital doctors **for fellowships** or sub-specialization in public/academic hospitals.
- Additionally, private hospitals could be validated upon certain scientific criteria to offer official fellowships, or even residency programs.



SUGGESTIONS PERMANENT PROBLEMS

- EU and national authorities could ask from Hospitals' administrations and Academic Institutions to invite normally **PP doctors to participate in CME activities in the Hospitals and in the Universities.**
- This should be a general rule and an open invitation to all doctors in PP.



Suggestions by participants for future actions by the UEMS

In General:

- ✓ Private practicing should be considered a way of care delivery that deserves respect
- ✓ Private practitioners should be considered as competent in their particular way of care delivery



Suggestions by participants for future actions by the UEEMS

Concerning training:

- Training in PP should be made possible
- Residency programs in private practice should be created
- Participation to collaborative studies and clinical trials
- Providing subspecialty programs (Fellowships)



Suggestions by participants for future actions by the UEMS

- **Concerning CPD:**
- Support for attending congresses
- Free online CME courses
- Facilitating participation in meetings and congresses



Suggestions by participants for future actions by the UEEMS

- Concerning logistics
- Allowing telemedicine practices
- Support for software applications
- Charging teleconsultation should be legally made available
- Financial – funding support for necessary specialised equipment in PP
- Financial support for protective material



Ukrainian crisis and Healthcare Professionals

- The Ukrainian crisis, additional to its detrimental effects in all Ukrainian people, will affect healthcare professionals in Europe
- Their engagement is crucial and obvious
- A big challenge, as covid-19 pandemic crisis has finished
- Focus on issues of healthcare staff by all European administration is more important than ever



INSUCOPP – Next steps

- The suggestions given by the Survey participants and summary of results, offer a broad field of possible interventions UEMS & EMOs could launch, support or explore.
- Main conclusions and suggestions were presented to UEMS Councils in Limassol and Brussels (October 2021 & April 2022)
- An invitation to all EMOs was sent afterwards, in order to collaborate in this highly important project



INSUCOPP – Further actions

- ✓ During web meetings, UEMS and EMOs intensively discussed all the issues addressed in the survey
- ✓ Further steps and actions to resolve issues in Private Practice were investigated
- ✓ Co - signment of a document (first step) with above conclusions and suggestions , has been sent to:
 - European Commissioner of health & other EU authorities
 - Ministers of Health of all member states in EU
- ❖ Asking them to take actions, towards solving the issues described above



INSUCOPP – FURTHER STEPS

- Meet National and European authorities and discuss with them the big issues of doctors in PP across Europe – Decisions have to be taken, with specific actions, at European and National level
- All EMOs that signed the document work in close collaboration in this project
- The role of National Medical Associations is crucial
Their intervention may prove highly beneficial



Some words of thanks

- All the participants in the survey.
- UEMS EEC for the decision, authorization and strong support to this initiative
- UEMS Office for the important contribution in communication and the classification of all input data
- Dr Marc Hermans, UEMS Vice President for his hard work in this task and the excellent collaboration
- All EMOs that have collaborated in order to have a common attitude and combined efforts and succeed in our goal



European Medical Organizations (EMOs)

➤ European Medical Organizations (EMOs) that support and collaborate in this project:

➤ UEMS

➤ CPME

➤ AEMH

➤ EJD

➤ FEMS

➤ UEMO

➤ CEOM



Final Conclusions

- Doctors in Private Practice encounter several, important issues
- Covid-19 pandemic had severe effects to private practice
- The survey and initiative by UEMS with the joint activity and collaboration of all European Medical Organizations, is the first well designed effort at European level to address all these issues and solve them
- Cooperation and collaboration among all contributors is

essential



Final Conclusions

- ❖ **Role of National Medical Associations**: crucial and massively important
 - Support these efforts – contact Ministers of Health in each member state – contact European Authorities
 - Lobbying might be very useful
 - Additional data for other issues in medical private practice can be incorporated
 - Other ideas and suggestions for actions to achieve the common goal are really welcome and greatly appreciated



Final Conclusion

- Doctors in Private Practice constitute a highly important contributor to medical workforce
- Several issues in medical private practice
- These issues may be solved if all the related parties work together and believe that we can make it
- Collaboration and faith in our target are the keys to success!

Acropolis (Athens) by full moon



Thank you for your attention !!