

E.A.N.A. Spring Meeting 2015

5th/6th June 2015, Madrid

NATIONAL REPORT – AUSTRIA

1. ELGA – ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD

The launch of the electronic health record, ELGA, has been postponed by one year; it shall be applied to hospitals only as from the end of 2015.

Until mid-2016 all public hospitals shall use ELGA. From that time all patients will be able to look into their own medical records made available by the hospital.

The compulsory participation for self-employed doctors in ELGA will follow in mid-2017.

It is continuously being worked on an improvement of usability and feasibility; furthermore tests to assess the potential safety and security risks are required.

There are also plans to include an “e-medication” application in ELGA, i.e. self-employed doctors shall have to enter the medication prescribed to a patient into a database. Medicines dispensed by pharmacies shall also be recorded. The e-medication application will be introduced in a pilot region in Deutschlandsberg in the province of Styria in the first half of 2016, and shall then successively be rolled out.

2. REFORM OF THE AUSTRIAN TRAINING REGULATIONS

The specific training in general medical practice as well as the specialist medical training is currently newly organized and structured. Prior to the medical training the completion of basic training (Common trunk) with a duration of nine months is required for prospective general practitioners as well as specialists.

In the future, the training in general medical practice will have a duration of 42 months and will foresee mandatory teaching practice with a duration of at least 6 months. In spite of the efforts of the Austrian Medical Chamber, the reformed training regulations will not introduce general medical practice as a specialty.

Admission to specialist medical training will be contingent upon completion of nine months of basic medical training, and will have a duration of 63 months (the duration is 72 months in total). As part of the reform the new training regulation will also include new specialties, such as cardiology. The new training regulation is presumably going to enter into force as of 1 July 2015.

3. PRIMARY HEALTHCARE CENTRES

On May 18th 2015, the first pilot project according to the new primary healthcare concept opened its doors in Vienna. The healthcare centre, which is financed in the framework of the regular contract for group practices, is currently staffed by three general practitioners as well as qualified nurses and medical assistants. In the future, another doctor as well as a social worker and a psychotherapist will become part of the multiprofessional team. However, the final responsibility lies with the medical staff. The GPs working in the centre practice as independent, self-employed doctors, i.e. they are not hired by any public authority. Special emphasis is placed on providing adequate care for chronically ill, multi-morbid and geriatric patients.

4. WORKING TIME OF HOSPITAL PHYSICIANS

On the 23rd of October the National Council has adopted the new hospital working hours act (KA-AZG), which constitutes an implementation of the European Working Time Directive of 2003. The amended act came into effect on January 1, 2015 and contains two substantive changes:

- From 1 January 2015, the daily rest period must be consumed fully and immediately.
- Furthermore, the average weekly working time must not exceed 48 hours. The new hospital hours act foresees a gradual reduction of the daily and weekly working time until 30 June 2021.

The adjustment to the new regulations proved challenging for many Austrian hospitals and has led to financial claims by doctors, who have so far gained considerable part of their income from working overtime.