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Denmark

The Danish online Patients' Handbook went live on September 6th 2011. It is a free online patient handbook on health and diseases. As the new handbook gives citizens direct access to the same information that doctors use, it is hoped that this will lead to a more open and transparent healthcare. The Patients' Handbook has more than 3,000 articles, written by more than 50 specialists and practicing doctors, and divided into disease articles, symptoms articles and studies. It is illustrated with over 2,000 medical drawings, x-ray images, animations and photographs, and is free of advertising and commercial interests. The handbook has been produced by a collaboration of Danish Regions, the official Danish eHealth portal sundhed.dk and the Danish Medical Association. This is the first time that the public health system has launched an online handbook of this kind.

The Patient's Handbook covers the same information as the Doctor's Handbook which was previously produced as a reference for practicing doctors. The one key difference is that the articles in the Patients' Handbook have been adapted for ordinary citizens. The handbook also includes a dictionary providing definitions of medical terms in everyday Danish. Hansen, Chairman of Danish Regions, said: "The Internet is already widely in use by Danes when conveying information about illness and health. The Regions have a goal to increase Danish knowledge in this field and give citizens the best available knowledge. A good healthcare system is an open and transparent healthcare system in which patients have access to all knowledge that can help them. Therefore, Danish Regions invested in the Patient's Handbook, in which you can find accurate, specialist and up-to-date information, which is approved by doctors who are updating the content regularly.

The Patient's Handbook is one of the Regions' 24 milestones for healthcare information technology (IT). These goals are to be achieved by 2013 through the Regions Healthcare IT Organisation, which is a forum for regional cooperation on healthcare IT.

Mr Hansen said: "With the publication of the Patients' Handbook yet another benchmark has been reached, and we are proud of this. It demonstrates the cooperation that creates healthcare IT which is effective and of high quality. One of the objectives is to make information easily accessible thereby giving citizens a good opportunity to be active patients, so that healthcare resources can be used most effectively."

For more information, please visit: www.epractice.eu

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