

## Volume 15, Issue 2/2013 - Association News

### Hospital Management In Times Of Crisis : Constraints, Challenges And Opportunities

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#### Challenges and Constraints in Times of Crisis

Today our hospitals face many challenges and constraints. Hospital budgets have been decreasing for many years and there are serious workforce shortages, especially in certain health professions, medical specialisations and geographic areas. Recent breakouts like H1N1/influenza, the highly infectious winter vomiting bug norovirus and hospital-acquired infections have a potentially huge impact for hospitals. On the other hand, there is an increasing clinical demand for high quality care combined with advances in medical technology. An ageing population also brings changing needs. The need for continuity of care is increasing while specialised care gets more centralised. This is just a short selection of the many challenges and constraints hospitals are facing.

Since 2008 and after a period of general growth and stability, all European Union Member States were hit –to different degrees - by a financial crisis, characterised by a strong increase in government deficit and public debt. Due to this precarious economic situation hospitals have then been at the core of many measures aimed at cutting costs and gaining efficiency, either directly or indirectly.

The aforementioned challenges and constraints still remain, but are now intensified due to the financial crisis. Some consider the crisis as a wake-up call, believing we have been too comfortable for too long.

#### Opportunities in Times of Crisis

When a ship arrives in a turbulent sea or storm, it needs a strong captain to take up the challenge and look for opportunities to find calm water, knowing both the potential and limitations of the vessel and crew.

During the 24th EAHM-congress speakers from all over Europe will guide you through similar journeys. You will hear about the constraints they experience, the challenges they encounter and the opportunities they found in order to make beneficial organisational and structural changes in shaping their hospitals for the future.

So with the weakened economy and a reduced hospital budget, what can a hospital manager undertake to continue to deliver better care?

Like a captain facing a storm, hospital managers will have to refine their thinking in times of crisis. The congress, bringing recognised experts in the field of management together, will elaborate on this from different angles, developing strategic guidelines, introducing business process reengineering and introducing innovation through new technologies and processes. In this way, we aim to focus on areas where strong leadership will make the difference. Roundtables will give the opportunity to share best practices and discuss addedvalue. Posters will contribute by showing the implementation and practical benefits of quality measurement, patient safety, communication, quality and cost-effectiveness. On the exhibition floor, healthcare industry professionals will provide in-depth insight into the latest developments in healthcare.

It is impossible for the speakers and posters to highlight all the current constraints, challenges and opportunities. Therefore we foresee plenty of networking opportunities where participants can exchange their experiences and views. And to get some insight into the hospitals of Luxembourg, the pre-conference programme includes hospital visits.

We invite you to visit the congress website at <http://www.eahm-luxembourg2013.lu> and are looking forward to seeing you in Luxembourg!

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