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Members

United Kingdom

Hospital Kitchens Unhygienic and Unclean

Local authority health inspection reports reveal that nearly half of all hospital kitchens and canteens in England could be failing to meet basic standards of cleanliness and hygiene.

Nearly a fifth of hospitals surveyed kept food at the wrong temperature or in unsafe conditions, while 11 hospitals had problems with vermin.

18 hospitals had food that was out of date, putting patients' health at risk.

At a Chester hospital, milk was found stored in the drug freezer in the radiology department. Worst performing hospitals are explicitly named in the report.

France

Report on Reduced Working Hours Regime in France

A report was released in July on the impact of the implementation of the 35-hour working week on hospitals.

Even though this mandatory shorter working week brought some benefits to hospital professionals, such as 20 additional holidays, a resting period of 48 hours after a 24-hour shift, and most of all, 3,500 posts created in France.

Unfortunately, the timing of the measure was not ideal, as there are less and less doctors in France.

The consequence is that doctors are still working the same hours and accumulating overtime, which, according to forecasts, would currently amount to the equivalent of between 550 and 800 million euros.

Switzerland

More Hospital Nurses Mean Fewer Infections

Researchers have examined patients who were admitted to the intensive care unit at the University of Geneva Hospitals in Switzerland; more than a fifth of the 936 patients who received mechanical ventilation during the study developed VAP (ventilator-associated pneumonia). This problem can extend a patient's stay at the hospital by an average 10 days and cost 10,000 to 40,000 euros to treat.

But the researchers noted that when there were fewer nurses on duty, patients were more likely to develop VAP. They propose that employing more than two nurses per patient per day would prevent a large proportion of infections. The nurses' training level has apparently no effect on infection rates.

Germany

30th Deutscher Krankenhaustag

The German hospital days (Deutscher Krankenhaustag) will again take place this year in Düsseldorf on the occasion of MEDICA, the largest medical fair in the world. The theme of the 30th Krankenhaustag on November 14-17 will be "Shaping the Future".

One of the focal points of this event will be the structural impact of the health reform on the hospital growth market. Current reform contributions by politicians and scientists are being questioned and innovative options are brought to light for the future of residential care.

The second day of the congress will be mostly devoted to health policy discussions around the theme "Hospital Takeovers – Growth Limits", as well as to a 'Krankenhaustag' information fair about medical care centres (MVZ, 'Medizinische Versorgungszentren') and ambulatory hospital care.

Over these four congress days, the German Krankenhausstag Society (GDK) expects more than 1,500 visitors from the hospital and health policy sector.

Ireland

Treatment Fund for Surgery in Private Healthcare Establishments

Given the growing waiting lists for surgical treatments in Irish public hospitals, the health minister has set up a specific "national treatment fund". This fund will finance surgical operations for public hospital patients in private healthcare establishments. In 2007, 80 million euros have been earmarked towards this fund. The prerequisite for a patient to be eligible is to have been taken up on a waiting list for at least three months.

Spain

New Health Minister

Bernat Soria Escoms, considered as one of the world's leading experts in stem cell research, was named as Spain's new health minister in July 2007. In 2002, he was told by the Spanish government to discontinue his research with human embryonic stem cells, and decided to accept a post as visiting professor at the National University of Singapore to continue his studies, while at the same time continuing research in Spain with mouse stem cells.

Bernat Soria Escoms graduated from the Valencia University and obtained a post-doctorate at the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry in Göttingen, Germany.

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