

More than 50% EU hospitals underfund IT



Hospitals across Europe in general consider IT as an enabler to improve patient safety and care. And even though deployment of big-ticket technologies – notably EHRs and eHealth tools – is on the rise, many provider organisations continue to make do with tight IT budgets.

As Robert Brauer, HIMSS Analytics Research and Quality Assurance Coordinator with HIMSS Europe, has noted: “Health IT is not sufficiently funded and supported in Europe.” Brauer’s view echoes the key findings of HIMSS Analytics Annual European eHealth Survey.

Sixty-two percent of the health IT professionals who participated in the survey reported their organisations have insufficient budgets for 2017 and 2018. While that is down from 68 percent in last year’s survey, HIMSS Analytics said it points to a strong need for more tech investments in the region.

“Some countries like Italy or Spain are going through financial crisis or just overcome those,” Brauer said. “For Germany I also could confirm the lack of central direction and support toward a strong eHealth Agenda.” Funding is the biggest obstacle in the UK, Austria, Ireland and Germany, survey results show.

There is some disconnect here as IT is seen as “an enabler to improved patient safety and care” by the vast majority of respondents, for example, 77% (Spain), 74% (Netherlands), 63% (Germany), and 64% (Europe-wide). Moreover, clinically-focused IT representatives – e.g., Chief Clinical Information Officer (CCIO) and Chief Nursing Information Officer (CNIO) – are in short supply across Europe, survey results show.

“You do have countries which are doing pretty well in terms of EMR adoption like Turkey, Spain, Netherlands and first of all Denmark or Estonia,” Brauer said.

European hospitals’ list of challenges invariably rings familiar to many American hospital IT pros, as well as the top priorities HIMSS Analytics found for the year ahead: EMR implementation, eHealth and patient engagement, and a desire to develop leadership skills.

The need to improve leadership skills of IT pros is important as the future of eHealth relies on eHealth leaders speaking up and helping lead their organisations down the path of digitisation. It also relies on smart minds doing the right things, analysts at HIMSS say.

Along with the similarities, however, there are substantive distinctions between the U.S. and Europe.

“Many European countries have their own agendas, budgets and issues in terms of digitisation,” Brauer said.

Source: [HIMSS Europe](#)

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