

Volume 11, Issue 4 / 2009 - News

National

Luxembourg

Association News

The Entente des Hôpitaux Luxembourgeois has moved to new offices. The new address is 5, rue des Mérovingiens au Z.A. Bourmicht à L- 8070 Bertrange.

During their General Assembly on June 30th 2009 Mr. Paul Junck has been elected as new President and Dr. Raymond Lies as Vice President, succeeding respectively Mr. Ernest Frieden and Mr. Henri Hinterscheid.

UK

Online Scorecards for Hospitals

A new online service that allows patients to rate and compare hospitals on issues such as car parking and waiting times has been launched by Health Secretary Andy Burnham.

As patients now have the right to choose when and where they receive hospital treatment, a new web-based scorecard is now available on the NHS Choices website to give people all the information they need to make the right choice of hospital for them.

The scorecard works in a similar way to internet comparison websites and allows patients to read reviews on mortality rates, infection rates, including MRSA and Clostridium difficile, cleanliness, staff performance and quality of food.

Every hospital in England is also being asked to encourage patients to leave feedback on the NHS website, as well as responding to comments, to drive up standards. Later this year, a similar service is being launched to allow patients to rate and compare GP Practices.

Fears For Patient Safety Due to Poor NHS Records The UK Audit Commission has found that a large percentage of patient records contained unreliable, or no, information.

The commission's checks were performed as part of its annual audit of the quality of the coding that lies beneath the bills that trusts send commissioners. The checks showed that on average eight percent of the 2008-09 bills audited were for the wrong treatment. Weak standards of documentation like this can lead to wider clinical and patient safety risks.

In a report of the audit, the commission stated, "The level of UTAs [unsafe to audit] demonstrates weaknesses in the standard of documentation, which may present wider clinical and patient safety risks." In the worst trust, 16 percent of records were unreliable.

The Netherlands

Dutch Publish a European "Robo Roadmap"

Dutch innovation agency, TNO, has published a 'robo roadmap' on the future of robotics in the medical and health sector for the next fifteen years. The roadmap is part of an EU funded study to equip the European Commission with policy recommendations for the application of robotics in healthcare. The study found 21 main innovation areas showing commercial potential, which were cut down to six key areas "ripe for investigation and road mapping."

Important areas identified include smart medical capsules that can travel through the body administering drugs or gathering information and performing surgical procedures, intelligent prosthetics, home patient monitoring systems, robot assisted mental cognitive and social therapies

and surgical robots. The results of the study have been presented at the Dutch Robotics Conference and the International Conference in Rehabilitation Robotics.

Spain

Patients and the Internet

A survey of 660 doctors who work in the Spanish healthcare system- 330 in primary health care and 330 in hospitals - in the provinces of Alicante, Madrid, Zaragoza and Huesca has revealed that patients looking up details of their condition online can complicate patient-doctor relationships and even undermine doctors' authority.

The study examines how health information on the Internet is changing the relationship between doctors and patients. It reveals that hospital doctors are more likely to devote more of their time to the Internet, cooperating with specific websites and recommending websites to their patients for complimentary information. The study also showed that 96% of the doctors surveyed have been questioned by their patients about information they have read on the Internet.

Germany

Medical Technology Plan

BVMed has published a ten-point plan for the care of patients with advanced medical technology as a basis for health policy discussions due to take place in the coming months along with the German Bundestag election campaign.

The ten points are:

1. The quality rating of medical devices must be demonstrated by means of the CE quality mark;
2. Access to medical-technical innovations should be designed to be unbureaucratic and flexible;
3. It must be possible to introduce medical-technical innovations into hospitals without restrictions;
4. We advocate an innovation pool to accelerate the introduction of medical-technological innovations into the SHI;
5. We campaign for a taxadvantaged innovation savings scheme (Steuer-begünstigtes InnovationsSparen, SIS);
6. We consider health services research a useful and necessary joint task for all players in the healthcare system;
7. Cooperation between medical institutions and industry is desired and essential for the improvement of patient care;
8. Emphasis must again be on the quality of medical devices (e.g. regarding aids and appliances). Patients must be able to freely choose their service provider and their products;
9. Homecare should become regular part of SHI, and
10. Telemedicine should become part of regular care.

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