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National News

United Kingdom

European Working Time Directive and Junior Doctors

Health Secretary Alan Johnson has announced a review into the quality of training for junior doctors in light of the implementation of the European Working Time Directive.

The review will evaluate concerns raised by many professionals that the introduction of the 48-hour working week will have a negative effect on junior doctors training, especially the on-the-job training they receive at work.

The independent advisory board on medical training, Medical Education England (MME), has been asked to commission the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB), the independent regulator of standards of training, to work with stakeholders to identify areas where changes of training might be necessary as a consequence of the reduced working hours.

Contract to Develop Patient Reported Outcome Measures

A new contract to help improve the use of Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) has been awarded to the Royal College of Surgeons and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. They have been commissioned to look at how the data, representing over 200,000 patients a year, can be best used to stimulate improvements in the quality of care patients receive.

PROMs are routinely used by the NHS when asking patients who undergo four common operations to assess how successful they felt the operation was at reducing symptoms and disability and improving their quality of life.

New ways of analysing and comparing the data will be developed and it is hoped this information will be published in a useful and coherent manner meaningful to the public, clinicians and managers. Costand clinical-effectiveness will also be compared, particularly regarding hip and knee prosthetics.

France

MedicFrance: the Online Information Portal on Medicine

MedicFrance is a new information portal on medicine that provides easy access to official data on medicines allowing the public to find reliable, objective and recent relevant information.

The portal will provide access to official information on medicines and health products for professionals, users of the health system and officials. The site provides information explaining the responsibilities of the various public bodies for decisions made regarding medicines. Users can be redirected to the websites of relevant institutions such as the French Safety Agency for Health Products (AFSSAPS) and the French National Authority for Health (HAS).

For more information, please visit www.portailmedicaments.sante.gouv.fr

Ireland

New Hospital Standards Published

In a bid to minimise and prevent the occurrence of hospital acquired infections, the Irish Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) has published 12 new standards. Hospitals have one year to implement the new standards to combat HAIs.

During the development of these national standards the project team conducted a comprehensive review of all available Irish and international literature on the subject, met with the relevant stakeholders and ensured the standards are person-centred, evidencebased, clear, valid and fit for purpose.

The standards include governance and management issues, hand hygiene, antibiotic resistance, staffing, medical device related infections, the physical environment and disease control. They apply to all health and social care services in Ireland including hospitals, community care services, GP and dental surgeries and primary care services.

For more information, please visit www.higa.ie

Denmark

Free and Equal Access to Healthcare

Free and equal access to healthcare was the chosen topic for the annual meeting of the Danish Society for Hospital Management held in May of this year. While the Danish government wants a health system in which all treatments of the highest quality are open to all of society, there is more and more evidence suggesting that there is a strong social bias in health.

The meeting included a wide range of presentations on topics including how the government, private and public institutions, medical industries and the regions feel about the present access to healthcare; new health law principles; privatisation and many other issues that have an effect on equality in healthcare.

For more information, please visit www.dssnet.dk

Croatia

DTS in the Croatian Healthcare System

The Association of Health, in collaboration with the Croatian Medical Chamber as a part of the Medicine and Technology fair in Zagreb, held a symposium entitled "DTS in the Croatian Healthcare System". The objective of the symposium was to publicise and explain the new DTS system (discussed at length in our country focus pg.36).

Presentations discussed all aspects of the new DTS system including its place in the reform of the healthcare system, an analysis of its implementation so far and a comparison with other DRG systems around the world. Problems in the practical implementation of the system was another key topic discussed from the point of view of doctors, nurses and managers.

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