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News Members

United Kingdom

NHS Booking System Failing Patients

The new NHS computerized booking system is failing to provide the promised level of choice of appointment times, dates and locations, according to a study. The first ever survey of patients who had used the Choose and Book system found that 66% of those asked were not given a choice of date for their outpatient appointment and the same number

were not given a choice of appointment time.

The First NHS Online Maternity Guide

The first NHS online maternity guide, offering a wealth of information on pregnancy and birth, at just the click of a mouse, was launched in August. The new Pregnancy Care Planner gives the latest and most comprehensive advice on all aspects of pregnancy, from getting pregnant, early pregnancy, the scans, to the birth, and the most up to date comparative guides to what is on offer at local maternity units.

Health is the most researched subject on the internet, and pregnancy is the most researched health subject. This new service is available on the national NHS website, NHS Choices and the link to the planner is: <http://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy>.

Scottish Hospital Admissions

Hospital admissions for heart attacks and chest pains fell by 17% in Scotland after a 2006 ban on smoking in enclosed public spaces. There were 2,684 emergency hospital stays for chest pains in the 10 months after the ban, compared with 3,235 in the same period before the law, they study said. England, which didn't have similar legislation until July 2007, had a 4% decline

Romania

Healthcare Staff Migration

According to a recent poll, 45% of doctors and medical assistants surveyed in Romania wish to leave the country. According to Dimitrie Onciul, director of the Filantropia hospital, "it has become very easy to migrate to the European Union, and it is particularly tempting given the difference in salary." After six years in medical school, a doctor who wishes to specialize receives a monthly salary of 220 euros, less than the 350 euro average salary, according to official statistics.

Spain

European Medical Bills

Europe is to pay 25 million euros to the Andalusian Health Service, SAS, for the medical bills of tourists who have been treated in the region. This summer the SAS has taken on 233 extra professionals, including 99 doctors, to meet the demand from tourists in coastal hospitals, and the money comes via the Health Cohesion Fund of the EU. On the Costa del Sol most European tourists to use the health facilities are from Britain (27%), followed by Germany (5%).

Germany

Gay and Lesbian Nursing Home

The Asta Nielsen Haus in Berlin's Pankow district is the first gay-only old people's home in Europe. The new facility is part of a 78-bed nursing home, with 28 beds reserved exclusively for gay and lesbian residents. The project is the result of a collaboration between a gay rights association and an aged care agency.

The home will allow residents to speak freely of their past and their relationships without encountering negative reactions or prejudices. Special
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training is given to care assistants, 50% of whom are themselves homosexual.

Denmark

Copenhagen Cuts Back on Ambulances

Regional authorities have recently announced a major cutback in the number of ambulances serving the Greater Copenhagen area as of 2009. Under the change, large areas of the Danish capital will be covered by just one ambulance at night while the number of ambulances available 24 hours a day in the Greater Copenhagen region will be cut from 38 to 28. However, a new centralised control system will maintain current levels of ambulance service and be more cost-efficient according to the head of the emergency medicine unit for the region.

Central and Eastern Europe

Surgical Disposables Boom

The surgical disposables market generated revenues of 35.1 million euros in 2007 and estimates this to nearly triple by 2014 to reach 101.5 million euros. As emerging markets look to raise the quality of their healthcare services, there has been a significant uptake of surgical disposables such as drapes, gowns, gloves and masks in Central and Eastern Europe. Ongoing education drives to spread awareness about hospital-related diseases have supported this trend. This market does however face the challenge of adhering to, and maintaining, EU standards of healthcare. As new Eastern European member states join the EU, they are compelled to raise their healthcare standards to meet EU mandated standards.

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