



HEALTH ECONOMICS

Burning Issue

Rational use of medicines –
Which instruments are used across Europe?

The promotion of the rational use of medicines is high on the agenda in several European countries. This is also true for Austria: In 2009 the Committee for Rational Use of Medicines of the Medicinal Products Advisory Council («Ausschuss für rationale Arzneimitteltherapie des Arzneimittelbeirates») was established, having its secretariat at the Austrian Ministry of Health. Staff of the Health Economics Department provided an overview of the key instruments of rational use of medicines in the 27 EU Member States.

Additionally they analysed in detail interesting tools and procedures for promoting a more rational use of medicines in five countries (Denmark, Germany, France, Italy and the Netherlands).

Generic promotion is an approach applied in many countries: In 22 EU Member States doctors are encouraged to write prescriptions by generic name (International Non-Proprietary Name, INN) instead of the brand name. Pharmacists in 21 EU countries are allowed to substitute an equivalent but lower-cost product (e.g. generic) for the pre-

scribed medicine (often the original brand). However, the prescription by INN and generic substitution are implemented in most countries on an indicative basis only.

Prescription guidelines for doctors, which have been developed by third party payers (e.g. sickness funds), are frequently applied instruments (in 23 EU Member States). In almost all EU countries the prescribing behaviour of doctors is observed by the payers. However, it differs among the countries how often and how institutionalised the feedback is provided.

A systematic survey and analysis of pharmaceutical expenditure and consumption are important starting points. Several EU Member States (e.g. Denmark, Italy) have established designated bodies for the monitoring of medicines. On the basis of collected data these bodies can implement specific measures targeted at controlling and promoting of the rational use of medicines.

The report «Rational use of medicines in Europe» is available (in German) for download at www.goeg.at/de/RAT; a summary of the report in English at www.goeg.at/en/RAT.

Intro

The newsletter of Gesundheit Österreich GmbH is published on a regular basis and addresses various priority areas (e.g. health economics, illicit drugs and oral health). Gesundheit Österreich GmbH is the national research and planning institute for health care and the competence centre of health promotion in Austria. Gesundheit Österreich GmbH has three business units: Österreichisches Bundesinstitut für Gesundheitswesen (ÖBIG), Bundesinstitut für Qualität im Gesundheitswesen (BIQG) und Fonds Gesundes Österreich (FGÖ).

News

» Croatia: Starting from April 2010, our Pharmaceutical Price Information (PPI) service also provides information on medicines prices in Croatia.

» A factsheet on the Croatian pharmaceutical system is available at www.goeg.at.

» In April 2010 the establishment of a central European Database on Medical Devices (EUDAMED) was decided by the European Commission. GÖG is in charge of reporting the Austrian medical devices, their manufacturers and certificates to the EU.

» PHIS Hospital Pharma Report (in English): Overview of the medicines management in European hospitals and a price comparison of selected medicines used in hospitals. Publication expected in June 2010; <http://phis.goeg.at>.

» PHIS country reports on in-patient pharmaceutical systems (in English) – newly published in 2010: the Netherlands, Latvia, UK and a German version of the Austrian report; <http://phis.goeg.at>.

Up-coming event

» Summer School at Utrecht University (Netherlands) on Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety, 28 June – 2 July 2010, and Pharmaceutical Policy Analysis, 5–9 July 2010. Sabine Vogler, Head of the Pharma Team, and Christine Leopold, also staff of the Health Economics Department, will participate as faculty. Further information: www.pharmaceuticalpolicy.nl.

Imprint

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