

Press Release



Germany has Europe's second most patient friendly healthcare system

Brussels, 31st of March 2009

Germany comes in on second place just after Denmark but before Finland according to the report "Empowerment of the European Patient - Options and Implications" published today in Brussels. That Germany has a system with good financial incentives for better healthcare is one of the reasons the outcomes are so substantially much better than for example the UK where the top-down system delivers a 17th place.

The ranking consists of a good mix of Western and Central and Eastern European countries. The report finds that patient empowerment is an area where not only money matters – instead the issue is about will and the perception of whom the healthcare system really aims to serve!

What could be better in Germany?

Further information has to be the first step towards patient empowerment. Firstly it is an issue of fostering patient literacy – then other tools will be essential allowing patients to become participants. Today's report shows that German patients need to get understandable information about the drugs they are using, from more sources than their doctor or pharmacist. This would ensure that patients can become truly active partners in healthcare something essential today to ensure good results in healthcare. A look at the Swedish site www.fass.se might be a start – there Swedish citizens can learn about their prescribed medicines and via the system even get rapid alerts via SMS or email if the authorities or producers learn that there is some kind of problem previously unknown.

Also, it is clear that a patient's rights legislation is needed and that patients involvement in decision making could be much better. Germany should for example look at Denmark for inspiration in these areas.

The ranking groups 18 indicators of empowerment into four categories: Patients' rights, Information, Health Technology Assessment (HTA) and Financial incentives. Each sub-discipline is weighted for importance to provide the overall score of max 1000 points.

The individual category leaders were as follows:

Patients' rights: **Switzerland**

Information: **Denmark**

Health Technology Assessment (HTA): **Denmark** and the **UK**

Financial incentives: **Belgium, Germany** and **Switzerland**

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For more information, the Report and the Matrix: www.healthpowerhouse.com

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