

Press Release



Italy failing, only 18th in European Patient Empowerment Ranking

Brussels, 31st of March 2009

Italian patients are not very empowered according to the report "Empowerment of the European Patient - Options and Implications" published today in Brussels. In this ranking Denmark comes first followed by Germany and Finland.

The top ranked countries are a good mix of Western and Central - Eastern European countries. The report finds that in patient empowerment not only money matters – instead the issue is about will and the perception of whom the healthcare system really aims to serve! This means that Italy, with its lack of good healthcare information and poor implementation of patients rights, scores badly.

What needs to improve in Italy?

Just having the opportunity to choose is not enough – a provider catalogue with quality ranking is needed to enable and empower patients!

Further user information has to be the initial step towards patient empowerment. First there is an issue of fostering patient literacy – then other tools will be essential allowing patients to become participants in care.

Today's report shows that Italian patients need to access understandable information about the medicines they are using, from more sources than their doctor or pharmacist. This would ensure that patients can become truly active partners in healthcare – quite essential today to ensure good results. A look into the Swedish information site www.fass.se might be a good start: Swedish citizens can learn about their prescribed medicines. This system even provides rapid alerts via SMS or email if the authorities or medicines producers learn about problems previously unknown.

Patients' involvement in decision is partly in place but could be far better. Italy can look for inspiration across the border and take Denmark or the UK as examples.

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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