

Press Release



UK 17th in European Patient Empowerment ranking, on par with Italy and Lithuania

Brussels, 31st of March 2009

UK patients have a mediocre power position, 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. UK is no 17.

The top ranked performers are a good mix of Western and Central and Eastern European countries. The report finds that in patient empowerment not only money matters – it is rather a matter of will and the perception of whom the healthcare system really aims to serve!

What needs to improve in the UK?

The UK has taken essential steps by introducing choice among care providers and by ensuring patient participation in the legislative as well as Health Technology Assessment processes. Key is to foster patient literacy – not until then better participation in for example the voluntary screening programs will be achieved in the UK.

Today’s report tells that UK patients should have access to comprehensive information about their medicines, from more sources than their doctor or pharmacist. Such knowledge would ensure that patients can become active partners in healthcare – quite essential today to ensure good results in healthcare. A look into the Swedish information site www.fass.se could be a good start. Here 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.

Following on such progress additional tools will become essential to involve patients in the decision-making, such as co-payment and other kinds of financial incentives. Given the mediocre NHS quality outcomes proven in earlier rankings by the Health Consumer Powerhouse there is a need for on-going reform.

The Patient 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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