

Regional European Organisation of the FDI

NATIONAL REPORT

Rome, Italy

17 – 18 April 2009

Country: POLAND

I. Changes - in the association and its organisation

The Polish National Committee for ERO-FDI is formed by the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists and the Polish Dental Society.

The Polish Dental Society is a scientific association, the membership is voluntary.

The Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists is the main professional organization in Poland. It is the organizational body of the professional self-government of physicians and dental practitioners who are associated in the chambers with equal status.

Membership is mandatory. Every physician and every dental practitioner who holds the right to practice the profession in Poland is a member of the chamber by virtue of the law.

There are 23 Regional Chambers and a separate chamber of military physicians and dentists. The Polish Supreme Chamber of Physicians and Dentists coordinates the work of regional chambers.

The main activities of the Chamber include:

- Awarding the right to practice as a physician or dentist and keeping the register of physicians and dentists.
- Co-operating in matters of professional specialization and continuing professional development
- Information centres for doctors and dentists
- Supervising the professional conduct (acting as medical courts imposing disciplinary sanctions)
- Setting principles of professional ethics
- Representing and protecting the professions
- Expressing opinions on draft legislation and health issues

The membership fee for the Chamber remains unchanged for many years. However recently it is being discussed whether a collective professional indemnity insurance for the members should be taken out by the Chamber and the premium would be included in the membership fee. This would allow to provide all dental practitioners with an insurance cover.

Current data:

According to data from the Central Register of Physicians and Dentists total number of dentists in Poland is 34 512. The majority of Polish dentists are women (appr. 75%).

It has been estimated that approximately 21 800 of all dentists are currently actively practicing dentistry in Poland.

II. Trends and developments

- in professional politics

Six legal acts aimed at reforming the Polish healthcare system were drafted by the Ministry of Health and adopted by the Parliament. They included law on healthcare facilities, law on patients' rights' protection, law on healthcare workers.

However, some of these acts were vetoed (law on healthcare facilities, law on healthcare workers) by the President and have not entered into force.

- in health and social politics

The public expenditure on healthcare in Poland is still insufficient.

The Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists continuously demands to spend more public money on health; the system of public health should undergo reform and the doctors remunerations should be more satisfactory.

- in educational politics

There are 10 universities educating dental students in Poland. The average number of graduates is appr. 860 a year.

The Ministry of Health has announced plans of cancelling the obligatory post-graduate internship that takes 12 months and is a requirement for graduates of dental studies to be awarded the full right to practice the profession in Poland. The Ministry argued that this would save money (the interns are paid their salaries from the state budget) and allow young dentists to start their independent professional carrier earlier.

The Chamber is against this plan, as it regards the internship as a very important and useful vocational training for graduates that enables them to get valuable experience before commencing independent practice. Surprisingly, most young dentists who were questioned also declared to be against cancelling the internship.

Nevertheless, at the moment there is no official document with draft amendments aiming at cancellation of the internship.

The Minister of Health set up a committee of experts to elaborate the principles of reform of the under and post-graduate medical and dental education. The representatives of the Chamber are among the members of the committee.

Dental practitioners in Poland are under statutory obligation to take part in continuing professional education.

The tasks are fulfilled by the Minister of Health in accordance with the Decree. A credit-points system is applied over a 4-year period. Continuing professional

development is conducted in various forms and in accordance with a grading scale. Every 4 years dentists have to collect 200 credit points by attending practical courses, lectures, seminars and congresses.

Continuing education is administered by the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists. The contents and quality of continuing education courses are supervised by Regional Chambers.

The Chamber holds the register of providers of continuing professional education events.

There is a wide offer of courses and training conferences in Poland.

Many regional Chambers organize courses and other forms of education, they are generally free of charge. The role of the Chamber in continuing education is increasing. In Regional Chambers "Educational Centres" are being opened in many districts.

Continuing dental education events are also actively carried out by the Polish Dental Society, it is one of the primary goals of this organization.

The e-learning is rapidly developing in Poland, even though this form of education is still not as wide as we could wish.

III. Changes in the insurance system

The expenditure of the National Health Fund (the organization administering general health insurance in Poland) on dentistry is insufficient for the dental needs of the society. Moreover the prices offered by the Fund are still underrated and often do not cover the real cost of treatment. Despite promises to raise the prices so that they meet the real costs, it has still not been fully accomplished by the Fund.

In Poland the majority of dental treatment is not covered by the public health insurance and traditionally patients cover those costs themselves. Only one third of dental practitioners in Poland have a contract with the National Health Fund.

Representatives of the Dental Practitioners' Committee of the Chamber are meeting the representatives of the National Health Fund on regular basis.

The Dental Practitioners' Committee is continuously stressing that due to limited financial resources for dentistry more attention has to be paid to long term pro-health and preventive actions. Dental care for children should also be a priority.

IV. Changes in fees

As regards the membership fee for the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists for many years it has been fixed at 30 PLN a month (appr. 7 EUR).

It has been recently raised to 40 (appr. 9 EUR) PLN a month, with a recommendation for the Regional Chambers to allocate the additional income into educational events organized by the Chambers and available for free for the members.

A Centre of Continuing Education for physicians and dental practitioners has been set up at the Polish Supreme Chamber of Physicians and Dentists. Its role is to coordinate the activities of the regional chambers on the field of continuing education and to offer grants for the best, non-commercial educational courses in the regions.

V. Further information

Events

- On 17 June 2008 a seminar was organized in Warsaw by the Chamber devoted to the issues of improving oral healthcare in Poland. The seminar was an introduction of the further activities connected with the World Oral Health Day. It was attended by representatives of dental profession, Medical Universities, the Ministry of Health, the National Health Fund. The special guest was prof. Kenneth Eaton. The seminar was also attended by a number of media representatives.
- The first World Oral Health Day was well celebrated by the Chamber. Information about the World Oral Health Day and related materials are on the website of the Dental Practitioners' Committee of the Chamber (www.stomatologia.nil.org.pl) and have been disseminated to the Polish dental professionals. A number of articles related to the World Oral Health Day have been published in the magazine of the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists – Gazeta Lekarska. This topic was well underlined on the front page of the magazine. Gazeta Lekarska is a monthly journal published by the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists. A free copy is sent to all doctors and dentists in Poland. The readership of the journal includes other healthcare personnel, pharmacy staff, health-care administrators staff of companies in the healthcare field and future doctors, i.e. medical students. The print run is 149,500.
- Special media announcements and programmes on the occasion of the World Oral Health Day were also in others newspapers and e-media, e.g. a radio interview with prof. Maria Wierzbicka, who is a coordinator of the Monitoring of Oral Health Status in Poland.
- The Dental Practitioners' Committee of the Chamber is actively taking part in the largest Polish dental congresses and exhibitions during which special workshops devoted to the role of professional self-government are taking place.
- The Dental Practitioners' Committee of the Chamber initiated and organized a number of seminars regarding professional illnesses and other professional burdens in dental practice. There are plans to publish a book on this subject.
- In September the VII World Congress of Medical Polonia takes place in Toruń. Detailed information may be found at: www.kongrespoloniimedycznej.org.pl. We would appreciate if the National Dental Associations disseminated information about this event among the dentists of Polish origins.

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