

## The changing role of nursing (New Eurohealth issue)

by *Sherry Merkur, Anna Maresso and David McDaid*

There is no doubt that the role of nurses has been changing over the past few decades, not only in terms of their evolving clinical and managerial responsibilities but also in terms of their education and training. These processes have been affected in many ways by developments at the European level, not least through directives on the free movement of professionals as well as the mutual recognition of professional qualifications. The latest issue of Eurohealth (volume 22, issue 1), which has just been published by the [European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies](#) (in which LSE Health is a partner), looks at the changing role of nursing.

Zander et al. kick off the **Observer** section by outlining the main findings of a wide-ranging and multi-country study on the current European nurse workforce and how the work environment and qualifications impact on retention rates, job satisfaction and patient care. Delving more deeply into the theme of nurse workforce migration, Leone et al. cast light on the complex combination of factors that shape the debate on the current imbalance of nurse supply and demand across European Union Member States. The authors use the United Kingdom and Portugal as illustrative case studies on the impact of increased mobility caused by some countries targeting others to fill their nursing vacancies.

Next, De Raeve and colleagues analyse whether European enlargement provides an opportunity for the nursing profession to gain traction on policy change. They report on findings related to the robustness of EU compliance mechanisms and the degree to which the nursing leadership is engaged in agenda setting and policy-making. This section rounds off with an article by Keighley, who explores how policy-making at the European level focused primarily on the free movement of professionals, harmonisation of training, and mutual recognition of education and training standards has resulted in a largely unplanned new European framework for nurse education and training. The author notes that this process has not always taken stock of the specific policy priorities of nurse representative groups.

In our **International** section, Edith Schippers, Minister for Health, Welfare and Sport in the Netherlands, discusses the three health priorities for the 2016 Dutch presidency of the EU, all of which have a strong cross-border dimension. In his article on the implementation of the Directive on patients' rights in cross-border health care, Palm discusses the reasons why patient mobility remains quite low and highlights how national variations in transposition, interpretation and transparency have created persistent hurdles. Completing this section is an article by Hervey assessing the claims made by the health policy community on the impact of European Union health law. Her detailed assessment is presented through the lens of four themes: consumerism; rights; equality, solidarity, and competition; and risk.

Finally, in the **Systems and Policies** section Araja and Kolves explain how Managed Entry Agreements (MEAs) have been employed in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as one of a number of tools designed to make new medicines available to patients, while at the same time safeguarding the financial sustainability of the health system. This is followed by an article critiquing the health system rankings of the Health Consumer Powerhouse by Cylus et al.

Our **Monitor** section features two new studies on [Strengthening health system governance](#) (by Greer et al.) and on [Ensuring innovation in diagnostics for bacterial infection](#) (by Morel et al.), while the normal round up of News brings you the latest on health policy developments around Europe.

We hope you enjoy the Spring issue!



Read the full [issue](#).

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Sherry, Anna and David edit the Eurohealth series.

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