

EUROPE: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH ISSUES IN EUROPEAN REGION FOR OCCUPATIONAL PHYSICIANS

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European region

- EU+3EFTA+2CC*
 - Labour force (379 million)
 - Active 243 million
 - Employed 220 million
 - Unemployed 23 million
- Other European countries
 - Labour force (109 million)
- Total Europe
 - Labour force (488 million)

EU+3EFTA+2CC

Employed 220 million

FW
2.5 m

Self-
employed
32.5 mill.

Employees 185 million

147 million

38
mill

158 million

27
mill

Full-time

Part-time

Permanent contract

Temp. contract

*European Union Labour force survey - Annual results 2015

EU Occupational health specialists and doctors

- 43.495 Occupational health specialists*
 - 0-Malta
 - ≈9000 Italy
- ≈3000 Occupational health doctors
- ≈2000-5000 workers supervised by OP
- OSH "Framework Directive" (89/391/EEC)
- Broad differences in specialists education, mainly based on differences in OHS legislation

*Prof. Milan Tucek (University of Prague) & UEMS-Unpublished data-2015.

EU Occupational health and safety needs

- The role of occupational physicians historically has varied among countries depending on national legislation, employer, employee and workforce needs.
- In past decades a decline in the traditional occupational diseases has been registered as well as the emergence of a range of health conditions reflecting advances in technology and the changing workplace.
- So there is increasing focus on:
 - Health promotion
 - Sickness absence management
 - Vocational rehabilitation
 - Management of the ageing workforce

EU Occupational health and safety needs

- Limited number of studies
 - Most of them based on occupational physician perceived needs
 - Limited number of studies based on assessment of employee and employer needs

EU Occupational health and safety needs

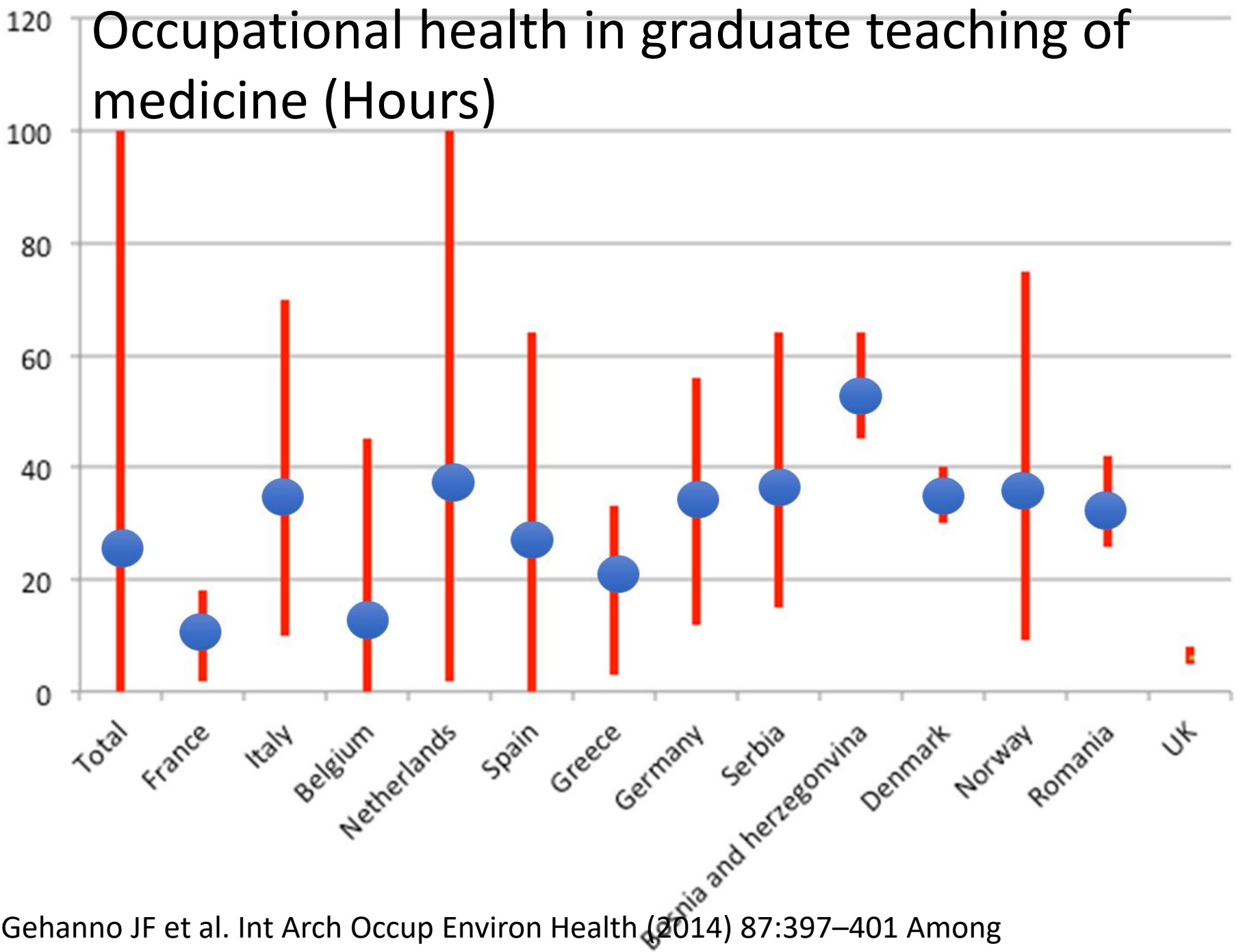
Table 5 Prioritisation of training areas by customers of occupational health (employers, employees, and their representatives) and occupational physicians

Competency	Prioritisation by mean scores	
	Customer group	Occupational physicians group ¹¹
Law	1	2
Fitness	2	5
Hazards	3	1
Communications	4	3
Exposures	5	8
Research	6	4
Promotion	7	7
Management	8	6

Occupational health in graduate education of medicine

- Huge variation in OH teaching in Europe
- Some faculties of medicine do not offer OH teaching at all
- Topics taught?
 - Most faculties provided occupational disease teaching
 - Only one half taught occupational history taking
 - Less than half provided topics concerning return to work
- Important for attracting new generation of OH specialists

Occupational health in graduate teaching of medicine (Hours)



Occupational health specialist education in EU

- 4 year training programme-Agreed
- Core competencies-Agreed
 - Occupational Medicine in Europe: Scope and Competencies. WHO 2000
 - UEMS
 - Occupational medicine Chapter 6 - Charter on Training of Medical Specialists in the EU Requirements-Learning outcomes 2012
 - UEMS WG 1 Specialist Training in Occupational Health and Medicine- Core Curriculum Proposal-2015



Occupational
Medicine
in Europe:
Scope and
Competencies



WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, Bilthoven

Occupational health specialist training

Table 1. Duration of medical training by respondent country

	Undergraduate training (years)	Postgraduate common trunk training (years)	Specialist training duration (practical requirements) (years)	Total (years)
Norway	6	1.5	5 (4)	12.5
Germany	6	2	3 (2.75)	11
UK	5	3	4 (4)	12
Slovenia	6	1	4 (3)	11
Croatia	6	1	4 (3.5)	11
Spain	6	0	3 (1)	9
Italy	6	0	4 (3)	10
Portugal	5	1	4 (2)	10
Ireland	5	4	4 (4)	13
Switzerland	6	3	2 (2)	11
Denmark	7	3.5	3 (3)	13.5
Finland	6	2	4 (4)	12
Belgium	7	0	4 (2)	11
Holland	6	0	4 (4)	10

Occupational health specialist education in EU

- Different training programmes reflect country and regional practice
- Mutual recognition of qualifications
- Free movement of specialists
- No EU process of Quality Assurance of product of training
 - Examination requirements?

Occupational health education issues in Europe

- Most of universities in Europe have limited capacities to offer OH teaching on graduate and postgraduate level.
- This problem is especially evident in field of workability assessment in graduate and postgraduate education of medical doctors.

Occupational health education issues in Europe

- Occupational Health or Occupational Medicine or Workers' Health?
- Discussion on a discipline title reflects a hidden problem of the Occupational health scope of work and the relation with other disciplines.
- UEMS defined comprehensive competencies of OP but, those competences, which reflects the scope of work, were not negotiated with other stakeholders.
- So, there are misunderstandings with General practitioners and with Occupational safety and other technical disciplines involved in Occupational health and safety.

Occupational health education issues in Europe

- There is also problem of OP`s relation with General practitioners with a short course in Occupational medicine.
- Due to lack of OPs in the past, some countries delegated a significant part of OP`s work to General practitioners with a short course in Occupational medicine. Nowadays, when they have sufficient number of OPs it is almost impossible to return this part of the work to OPs.
- New WHO concept on Basic Occupational Health Services (BOHS), based on brilliant idea to improve access to OH services, will not contribute to solution of mentioned problem.

Way forward

- Open and frank discussion under the umbrella of ILO, WHO, ICOH and other international organizations responsible for Occupational health and safety, may result in a Occupational (or Workers') health position paper which will clearly define competences and the scope of work of Occupational physicians as well as of other Occupational safety and health disciplines.

Way forward

- Development of the position paper might help bridging European national occupational health practices and standards.
- Studies on occupational health and safety needs of employees, employers and other stakeholders should be initiated to modernize OP`s scope of work and consequently educational programs.

Way forward

- There is a need for development of EU Quality Assurance in OH training.
- If we miss the opportunity to further regulate and improve our discipline, soon there will be more open issues and we will lose it.