Mobility of Health Professionals (MoHProf)

Worldwide mobility of health professionals is a growing phenomenon, impacting the health care systems of receiving, transit, and sending countries. EU Member States are increasingly affected by these developments – which might occur simultaneously within the same country. Therefore, the need to develop European policies to adequately address these issues is urgent. At the same time, reliable and differentiated knowledge and findings as a basis for such policy are lacking. MoHProf will contribute to improving this knowledge base and facilitate European policy on human resource planning.

Research issues

The general objective of the project is to research current trends of mobility of health professionals to, from and within the EU. Research will also be conducted in non-European sending and receiving countries, but the focus lies on the EU: comparative studies in a selected range of representative states will determine the impact of different types of migration on national health care systems. Partners inside and outside the EU will cooperate in the project. Scientific institutes capable of conducting sound investigations are working together with worldwide active international health service organisations, which have the information and global links for research and policy development on international mobility.

Methodological approach

An innovative approach will generate more comparable, specified and qualified data gathered by mainly qualitative research. The project looks for quantities of migration flows, as well as detailed qualities like professions, motives, circumstances and the social context, i.e. push and pull factors. Crucial for the approach are key stakeholders, which represent the relevant unities, organisations, and sectors in national health care systems. They will enable the collection of existing data and statistics, but, above all, enable the generation of new, qualitative data. In-depth interviews, based on thematic guidelines, with representatives of these key stakeholders will allow a triangulation of the data: their expertise on health professionals’ mobility and its impact on structures and processes of health care systems will qualify the quantitative findings and explore what mobility means for the health care systems and the persons and organisations involved.

Policy dimension

The policy dimension of MoHProf comprises recommendations on human resource policies in European and third countries for policy and decision makers on the basis of sound empirical research. A key part constitutes the development of conceptual frameworks for monitoring systems concerning the mobility of health workers. Consultation meetings and roundtables with policymakers will be an essential component of the project.

MoHProf is funded by the European Commission as a medium-scale collaborative project within the Seventh Framework Programme, theme 1, health.
Participating scientific institutes and international organisations

The lead partner of MoHProf is WIAD. The participants form a Project Steering Group (a). Research will be supervised by a Research Steering Group (b) and conducted by Regional Research Partners (c).

Scientific Institute of the German Medical Association (WIAD), Germany (a, b, c)
International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mission with Regional Functions, South Africa (a, b, c)
Medical University of Varna (MUV), Bulgaria (a, b, c)
Centre of Migration Research of the Warsaw University (CMR), Poland (a, b, c)
Institute of Health Policy and Development Studies of the University of the Philippines (IHPDS) (a, b, c)
Public Health Institute (PHI), USA (a, b, c)
International Hospital Federation (IHF), France (a, b)
International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mission with Regional Functions, Belgium (a, b)
International Council of Nurses (ICN), Switzerland (a)
World Medical Association (WMA), France (a)
European Medical Association (EMA), Belgium (a)
Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA), Switzerland (a)

Sampling of countries

The sampling is based on high absolute figures and/or high rates of foreign or expatriated health professionals in the health care systems of the receiving or sending countries, respectively. Research will be conducted in EU receiving countries (Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom), sending countries to the EU (Angola, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, South Africa [Africa]; India, The Philippines [Asia]; Russia, Ukraine [Europe]), sending countries within the EU (Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland, Romania) and destination countries for health professionals from EU Member States (Australia, Canada and USA).

Duration and time schedule

The project comprises four phases over a three-year period starting from November 2008:

- Pilot phase of theoretical and methodological work (month 1-6)
- Qualitative and quantitative field studies inside the EU and third countries on the macro level (month 7-18)
- Qualitative and quantitative field studies inside the EU and third countries on the micro level (month 19-30)
- Development of empirically based policy recommendations (month 31-36)

There will be four project meetings, starting with a kick-off meeting and project launch and concluding with an international conference, and roundtables as appropriate.

Deliverables

Deliverables comprise guidelines for research; comprehensive, comparative reports on the macro, as well as on the micro level – based on respective country reports; and empirically based recommendations for human resources policies, including conceptual frameworks for monitoring systems. Moreover, dissemination of the project results and outcomes to a wider public of target groups will include a web site, a roundtable with policy makers and above all the international conference addressing experts, stakeholders and policymakers.

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