

Estonian Society of Internal Medicine

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Health care usage in Estonia

- Population: 1.35 million
- Life expectancy at birth 80 years (females 83, males 75)
- 5.1 million outpatient contacts per year (3.8 per person)
- 2.8 million e-consultations per year (2.1 per person)
- 196 000 hospitalizations per year (0.15 per person)

Estonia's Healthcare System

- Publicly funded through compulsory insurance
- Employers' tax
- 95% of the population covered

- Primary care (family doctors, list system)
- Emergency care (medical ambulances)
- Specialist outpatient care
- Hospital services (in- and outpatients, day care)
- E-consultations
- Rehabilitation, long-term and nursing care

Hospitals in Estonia

18 hospitals in the national hospital masterplan:

3 regional hospitals

4 central hospitals

12 general hospitals

- 9 smaller specialized public hospitals
- 20 private hospitals (small, narrowly specialized services)



Tartu University Hospital



Põlva Hospital

- Number of hospital beds **6373** (46.5 per 10 000 population)
 - Internal medicine profiles **1411**
 - General internal medicine **604**
 - Specialized internal medicine 807
- Number of doctors **4911** (36.4 per 10000 population)
 - Internal medicine profile **676**
 - General internists **156**
 - Other specialities of internal medicine 520

Professional societies of internal medicine

- Long history of professional societies
- 1970s establishment of subspecialists' societies- in parallel with subspecialisation of internal medicine
- 1970s and 1980s subspecialists considered themselves also internists, parallel societies of internal medicine and societies of subspecialities
- With increasing subspeciality departments in hospitals and more strict requirements for training, the role of (general) internal medicine decreased

Dilemma

- The 21st century- subspecialists not interested in the „umbrella“ organization of Society of Internal Medicine, general internists as a minority in this organization. Demotivation for young doctors to choose the career of internal medicine.
- An increasing need for general internal medicine (increasing age of patients, polymorbidity, acute care services, general hospitals out of big cities)
- Representing internal medicine in society, government, health insurance, university
- Dilemma in front of internal medicine and Society of Internal Medicine- how to continue?

Internal medicine- Estonian solution

- 2006: Estonian Society of Internal Medicine is primarily the society for general internists
- Internal medicine is a hospital-based speciality
- Internal medicine has its own training program/residency
- Internal medicine physician= (general) internist
- Subspecialities have their own full specialities
 - their training includes some training in general internal medicine
 - they do not receive the speciality of internist

Estonian Society of Internal Medicine

- A new energy, leadership, motivated young internists
- A small but active society
- A partner to all other subspeciality societies
- Representing internal medicine in front of government, health Insurance, medical association
- A high demand by hospitals:
 - increasing number of beds in big hospitals while most of the subspeciality beds are decreasing
 - need for acute care services
 - need by specialised departments (esp surgical departments)

ESIM educational activities

- Internal medicine meetings, joint meetings with other societies
- CME workshops
- Collaboration with:
 - University of Tartu
 - Residency training program- national program, responsibility with the University of Tartu, represented in curriculum design, entrance and final examinations
- 5-year residency program
- Subspecialty options available (geriatrics, allergology, clinical pharmacology)
- Structured mentorship
- Competency-based assessments

ESIM Clinical & Scientific Work

- National clinical guidelines- together with all other specialities
- Support for research initiatives
- Participation in multicenter studies
- Advisors at the Ministry of Social Affairs
- Partner for Health Insurance Fund
- Proposals for the list of services, price list, medicines on the list

ESIM & International Collaboration

- Member of EFIM
- Participation in European congresses
- Residents` summer and winter schools
- Joint research projects
- Bilateral exchanges

Digital Health

- Electronic Health Records (EHR)
- National platform -depository of all radiological examinations
- National depository of prescriptions, e-prescribing
- National depository of health records
- National e-health infrastructure

Challenges in Internal Medicine

- Aging population
- Physician workload and burnout
- Recruitment and retention

Problems

- Shortage of internists
- Generation gap (all physicians, due to low intake by the University in 1990s)
- Location of jobs: outside Tallinn and Tartu the hospitals face shortage of doctors
- Increased demand for IM: ageing population, multimorbidity, IM is demanded by other (surgical) departments as well
- On-call work, nights, weekends- low attractiveness
- Payment not corresponding to the efforts needed by doctors
- Subspecialists positions more attractive

Presidents of the Estonian Society of Internal Medicine



Dr Arvo Mesikepp



Prof Margus Lember



Dr Kai Sukles



Dr Marit Märk

