



European Commission

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Health-EU newsletter 107 - Focus

Patient safety gets better treatment across EU countries



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When a patient is treated in a hospital, they expect to get well and receive the best care possible without being exposed to medical errors that could lead to adverse health effects or infection. However, nearly half of EU citizens feel they could be harmed while being treated: both in hospital and in primary care settings.

Ensuring the safety of anyone that comes into contact with healthcare services is one of the most pressing healthcare challenges to date, which is why in 2009 EU Member States adopted a Recommendation where they agreed on a number of actions to increase patient safety.

In the EU, about 10% of hospitalised patients suffer from a medical error: these include wrong diagnosis or wrong dose of a prescribed medication, plus 1 patient in 20 acquires a healthcare-associated infection. Much of this harm is preventable but requires efforts from policy makers, health professionals and even patients themselves.

The Commission's recently published **report** on the implementation of the **Recommendation** by the Member States concluded that:

- Member States have embedded patient safety in public health policies and have taken many actions to prevent and control healthcare-associated infections.
- Reporting and learning systems on adverse events could be developed further.
- There is still room for improvement as regards involving patients in patient safety and training health professionals.
- Actions should target not only hospitals but also non-hospital care.
- There is a need for more evidence on the costs of unsafe care.

During the informal meeting in Dublin on 4-5 March 2013, EU health ministers confirmed the interest of further work on the areas identified by the report.

Patient safety knowledge is continually evolving and, with much work to improve it already, underway healthcare organisations across EU countries are making major steps forward. By focusing further on lessons learnt and the sharing of best practises and knowledge across EU countries, the European Commission will continue to make sure patients are not exposed to unnecessary harm or potential harm associated with healthcare and to make healthcare much safer for everyone.

Health Programme Projects

Patient Safety and Quality of Care, PaSQ Joint Action »

This project is building on the experience and network of the European Union Network for Patient Safety (EUNetPaS) to promote the organisation of Patient Safety and Quality of Care platforms in all European Member

Research and Patient Safety in Europe »

The project will develop rigorous, generic methods for the integration of Primary Care clinical and research activities, to support patient safety and clinical research.

States.

EU Health Prize for Journalists – Articles

Medical alert dogs for diabetic and autistic persons, by Melisa Tuya Sánchez, national winner for Spain »

The article reveals the case of a diabetic Spanish baby and how dogs can help in detecting low blood sugar levels thanks to their keen sense of smell. The Bocalán Foundation trains dogs to help diabetic people and autistic children in Spain.

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