

The European health and care workforce crisis: insights into solutions

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Take home messages:

The health and care workforce crisis in Europe is also a digital skills-, a digital health literacy-crisis.

There is no resolution of the health and care workforce crisis without resolving the digital skills-, the digital health literacy-crisis

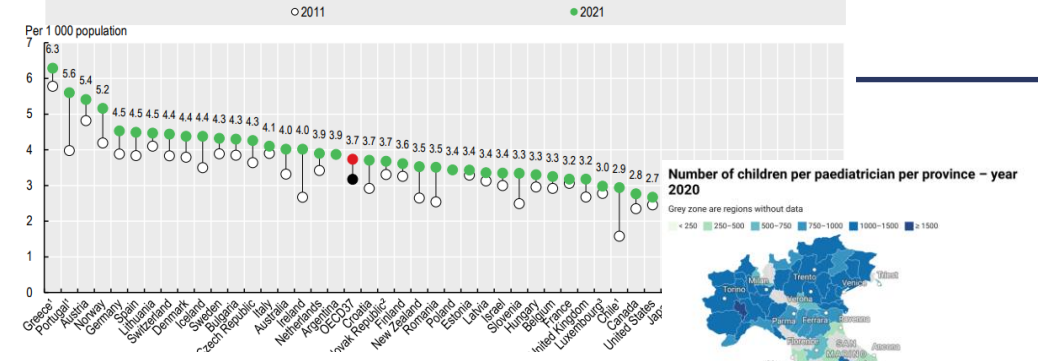


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A crisis with many faces and different roots

Figure 8.4. Practising doctors per 1 000 population, 2011 and 2021 (or nearest year)



- Shortages
- Attrition
- Medical Deserts
- Skill-mix and skill-gaps
- Health workforce replenishment (training pipeline not matching retirement)
- Shrinking cohorts to recruit from

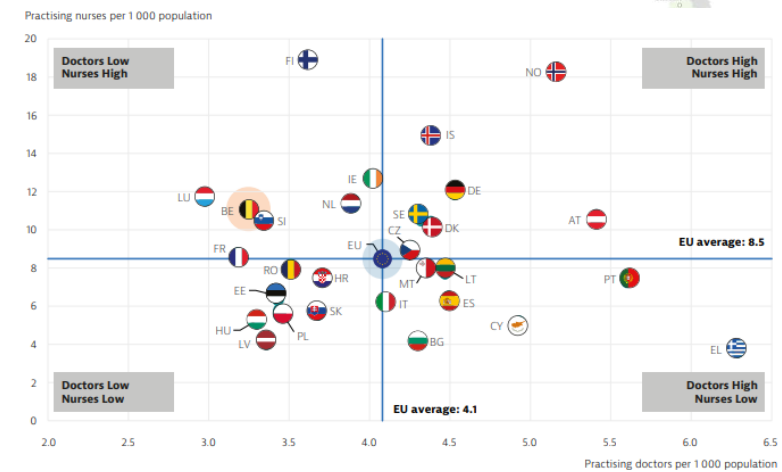


Fig. 1. Framework for action on the health and care workforce in the WHO European Region 2023–2030

The twin challenge of addressing the health and care workforce crisis

- 1) Firefighting the current crisis
- 2) Health System Transformation

Primary healthcare
Care integration



Health and care workforce in Europe: time to act



Skill-mix innovations

- Nurses in dedicated health promotion and prevention roles
- Advanced practice roles for nurses, pharmacists and physiotherapists
- Skills for new settings, e.g. hospital at home
- Patient navigators
- Teamwork

Leading professions in skill-mix innovations

- Main providers of skill-mix innovation: Nurses, Pharmacists
- Other professions: dietitians, physical therapists, CHWs/lay workers, other
- Physicians less often covered
- Multiprofessional teams (but composition often not clear)
- Various professions subsumed

What's needed in the first place: Continuous professional development



Broad categories of digital competencies needed by health and care workers have been identified,

- digital literacy
- communication and collaboration
- safety and security
- problem solving and analysis
- digital content creation

All health professionals; patients and informal carers

But!!! Availability of digital skills education and training courses is currently not sufficient in the EU, with gaps in courses for certain professions, in non-English languages and for more advanced digital health areas such as robotics, artificial intelligence, and genomics

No time for training during a health and care workforce crisis

National/regional policymakers can take concrete actions to improve availability of digital skills education and training courses by:



- providing **leadership** and developing comprehensive digital health **strategies**, with up-and-reskilling as a core aim
- putting in place a **systematic approach** to digital skills development, together with **sufficient funding** for implementation, that covers education and training at all levels
- **Legally embedding digital skills** and competencies in education and training requirements
- fostering **cross-sectoral cooperation** between key stakeholders especially in health and education, and ensuring leadership and buy-in from professional associations
- putting in place the **technical infrastructure**, funding and legal frameworks to support successful implementation of digital health technologies

One problem and three strategies to overcome

- Training is in most European countries a regional competence;
- Medical schools and university enjoy autonomy
- Medical and nursing councils have a say

- Win-over the academic medical and nursing leadership
- Play it like the EU: establish a federal/national budget line for digital training to be used locally
- Be France!
- Use all of the above at once!