



# SHORTAGE OF HOSPITAL DOCTORS IN EUROPE AND TASK SHIFTING



Fédération Européenne  
des Médecins Salariés  
European Federation  
of Salaried Doctors

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# Shortage of hospital doctors in Europe and task shifting

- Definition (WMA)
  - “Situation in which a task normally performed by a physician is transferred to another healthcare professional with a different or lower level of education or training, or to a person with a specialized education to perform a limited task only, without having a formal education”



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# Shortage of hospital doctors in Europe and task shifting

- Background
  - Shortage of Doctors
  - “Recognition of the relevance of task shifting in countries where the alternative is no care at all”



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# Shortage of hospital doctors in Europe and task shifting

Doctors / nurses per 100.000 inhabitants

	South-Africa	Botswana	Ghana	Zambia	Tanzania	Malawi	USA	UK
Doctors	69.2	28.7	9.0	6.9	2.3	1.1	230	256
Nurses	388.0	241.0	64.0	113	36.6	25.5	1212	937

# Shortage of hospital doctors in Europe and task shifting

- Argument
  - Shortage of Doctors
  - “Recognition of the relevance of task shifting in countries where the alternative is no care at all”
  - “The solution for one country cannot automatically be adopted by other countries”
  - Saving Money (?) by cutting costs

# Shortage of hospital doctors in Europe and task shifting

- Impact / Risks

- Junior doctors (challenge to junior doctors education and training)
- Second rate services
- Patient safety
- New liabilities

# Shortage of hospital doctors in Europe and task shifting

- Prescription by nurses
  - Argument
    - more free valuable time for physicians do other tasks

# Shortage of hospital doctors in Europe and task shifting

- Prescription by nurses
  - Continuity of medication ?
  - Needed ?



e-records; e-prescription



# Shortage of hospital doctors in Europe and task shifting

- Prescription by nurses
  - New medication
  - Training ? Education ?

# Shortage of hospital doctors in Europe and task shifting

- Prescription by nurses
  - Change medication
  - Nurses' knowledge on interactions between drugs, especially in polymedicated patients ?

# Shortage of hospital doctors in Europe and task shifting

- Prescription by nurses
  - In the framework of a team
  - Training, education, supervision
  - Clear protocols
  - Auditing, monitoring
  - New liabilities

# Shortage of hospital doctors in Europe and task shifting

- Prescription by nurses
  - Is not just writing
  - Medical act based on a medical diagnosis
  - The use of health care products for nursing practice cannot be confused with the prescription of drugs
  - First class and second-class patients?
  - More exposed, more vulnerable (low knowledge) to industry advertising?