EU faces serious recruitment problems in the health-care sector

Health care is one of the largest sectors in the EU, with around 171 million jobs in 2010, which accounts for eight per cent of all jobs in the EU 27. The number of jobs in the sector increased by 21 per cent between 2000 and 2010, creating four million new jobs. According to the EC document, the health-care sector is even continued to grow during the economic crisis, with the positive trend reflected in all age groups. Forecasts predict that it will remain a growing sector, even though employment growth will be more modest compared with 2000 to 2010.

Lack of recruits

As the population ages, the demand for health care and thus for labour in this sector will increase dramatically. The number of elderly people aged 65 and over is projected to almost double over the next 50 years, from 87 million in 2010 to 152 million in 2060. According to the EC paper, long-term and formal care is likely to increase, with an expected reduction in the availability of informal careers, for example as a result of changing family structures. Currently, most member states are facing critical work-force shortages in certain health professions and specialisations or geographic areas. Rounding from this, the renovation bill is drastically shrinking the EU’s health-care workforce. In 2000, about 30 per cent of all doctors in the EU were over 55 years of age, and by 2020 more than 60,000 doctors or 3.2 per cent of all European doctors are expected to retire annually.

At the same time, not enough young recruits are coming through the system to replace those who leave. In Italy, 13,400 nurses were due to retire in 2010, but only 8,500 graduated in 2006/2009. Germany is facing serious difficulties in training a sufficient number of graduates. Slovakia has an insufficient number of nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, radiological assistants and paramedics, and Hungary faces serious bottlenecks in supply of staff caused by a reduced number of graduating nurses. Utilised specialist training places have been reported in Austria, France, Hungary and Romania.

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Jobs not appealing

The reasons for the lack of health-care workers are well known. Even though the level of education among health-care and social workers is higher than average, many job in the sector are poorly paid. Overall wages levels in the health-care and social services sectors tend to be lower than in other sectors of the economy. This tendency is related to the high rate of female employment in the sector and to the sex pay gap. On top of this, employees are often faced with long and demanding working hours, stress or difficult work-related tasks. These factors are reasons to quit for those already working in health care and make the sector unappealing to recruits.

European nurses in particular are significantly unhappy with their working conditions. According to the EC document, many report that they intend to leave their hospital positions, with numbers reaching from 19 per cent in the Netherlands to 43 per cent in Finland and Greece.

Dentists needed in Finland and the Netherlands

The consequences are a potential shortfall of around one million health-care workers by 2030, increasing up to two million if long-term care and ancillary professions are taken into account. This means around 15 per cent of care will not be covered, compared with 2010.

The EC document stresses the importance of recruiting more dentists and orthodontists in the private health-care sector, including the dental care provided in offices and mobile clinics. The number of general practitioners is expected to continue to increase, which will require additional dental services. The EC paper outlined a number of actions to support the actions to tackle health-care shortages and to boost job creation in the health-care sector.

The complete document, including a detailed action plan to tackle the challenges facing the health-care sector, can be found in the document section at www.todayspaper.eu.
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Conical internal connections will fuel future growth in European dental implant market

By Dr Kamran Zamanian & Ian van den Dolder, iData Research Inc., Canada.

The dental implant and bone graft substitute market is the most rapidly advancing segment of dental technology, and leading companies in this market must consistently develop new products supported by research from scientific and academic organizations to remain competitive. Recent cases have demonstrated that when larger market shares in almost every European market. In many segments, these companies are either regional or captured from overseas markets such as Japan, Korea and Israel. Registration products and barrier materials have been particularly affected by consumer austerity, as these products are discretionary in many cases.

However, a growing number of companies continue to demand high-quality products, guarantees of service and scientific improvements, which only premium manufacturers are equipped to offer. Conical internal connection is one such recent innovation, and currently constitute the fastest-growing connection type in the dental implant industry.

Many dental implant and bone graft substitute companies have looked to expand their product portfolio or create new markets while they create package deals to offset competition from rapidly emerging low-priced competitors. Significantly, many European and US companies involved in this market have begun to invest in rapidly emerging periphery clusters such as Turkey.

Increasing prevalence of conical internal connections

Dental implants are connected to final abutments in one of three ways: internal connections, external connections, or single-unit devices in which the implant and abutment are already attached. Furthermore, internal connections have two sub segments: butt joint internal connections and conical internal connections.

Research has shown that a lack of micro gap in the implant is the abutment, and the abutment, creating a pump effect for bacteria into the connection area. When bacteria are present in the micro-gap, they can cause inflammation, tissue recession and bone loss. Recent clinical studies have demonstrated that, on average, conical connections offer a smaller micro-gap than butt joint connections, in addition to a greater mechanical level of stability. As a result, conical connection types have become hugely successful in the dental implant market, and the majority of leading dental implant manufacturers have introduced conical internal connection products. Conical connection types will continue to represent one of the fastest-growing segments of the dental implant market.

Turkey one of the fastest-growing markets in the world

Turkey is one of the fastest-growing dental implant markets, congruent with strong economic growth that weathered the recession far better than the EU and nearly any region in Europe. The technology of dental implants in this country has advanced rapidly, as most of the major players in the European market moved quickly to gain a strong market share in Turkey. Additionally, this market benefits from low labour costs, which add to the objective for implant companies to establish domestic subsidiaries or local distribution partners, fuelling options for consumers. Turkey is also a popular destination for dental tourism, especially among patients from more expensive European markets. From 2008 to 2018, the Turkish dental implant, final abutment and computer guided surgery market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 20.4 per cent.

In May 2011, AGS Medikal Ürünleri, the first major Turkish company to produce dental implants, commenced operations in the province of Trabzon, on the coast of the Black Sea. The company was established with an initial 5 million Turkish lira investment. Market experts predict that the company will soon be joined by other Turkish dental implant manufacturers that will offer lower-priced products to compete domestically and later internationally with larger implant companies.

EU medical tourism to strongly impact dental implant market

The EU directive on cross-border healthcare that comes into force in 2013 will have a strong impact on the European dental implant market. This directive will liberalize the medical tourism market, which is significant, as dental treatment procedures account for nearly half of medical tourism in most major markets. The directive gives patients the right to be reimbursed for treatment they receive in other EU countries. This could lead to more Western Europeans traveling to Eastern Europe, including Poland and Bulgaria, which are rapidly developing the quality of the medical services they offer.

The UK features one of the highest rates of outbound dental tourism, as patients are accustomed to large out-of-pocket costs for the procedures owing to the legacy of the National Health Service. Whereas rich patients from developing countries used to come to prestigious hospitals in the UK and elsewhere for treatment, lower-priced medical travel from the UK has been growing far faster than inbound over the past decade, as UK patients are increasingly traveling abroad for lower costs. Figures suggest more than 50,000 citizens of the UK go abroad for treatment annually. The number of outbound medical tourists from the UK rose by 17 per cent from 2002 to 2009.

Dental implant companies follow success of conical internal connection

Internal connection types as a whole are becoming increasingly dominant in the dental implant market. Conical internal connections and butt joint internal connections represented 83.4 per cent of implants with an internal connection in 2011. Conical internal connections is the fastest-growing segment of the market and expected to increase at a compound annual growth rate of 21.1 per cent by 2018.

Nobilis (Nobil Biocare) was one of the foremost early successes of conical connection types, and was rapidly adopted by consumers owing to clinical results demonstrating its greater stability and smaller micro-gap between implant and abutment. The majority of large companies now offer a conical connection, as micro-gap is expected to overshadow butt joint internal connections increase significantly. for ethical and perceived smaller diameter micro-gap offered by conical internal connections. Many companies are combining these connection types with tapered shape and surface treatments as the current generation of premium products.

The Conical internal connections will account for nearly half of all dental implants sold by 2013, as many companies will continue to invest in research and development initiatives for the conical internal connection types.