Horizon Scanning: future skills and competences of the health workforce in Europe

(draft findings)

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WP6 Horizon Scanning

Horizon scanning and qualitative methods

Future skills

Pilot study

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Forthcoming

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Objective of report on future skills and competences

“The report will give an estimation of the future needs of skills and competences and their distribution. It will contain a series of papers either covering off a key professional group (e.g. nurses) or a large trend (e.g. ageing population).”
Horizon scanning

Horizon scanning in health workforce planning and forecasting is used to explore and describe the factors and forces, and their inter-relationships, in workforce systems.

The use of horizon scanning and the produced report and briefs aim to increase our collective knowledge of the factors and forces which may drive changes in the skills and competences required from health workforces over the next 20 years.
Skills and competences

The language of skills and competences is useful when considering multiple health workforces, and their potential activity in the future, because it allows a consideration of what will need to be done rather than trying to work forward from the existing division of roles and responsibilities.

To develop this approach, skills and competences are conceptualised in a generic framework (consistent with approaches in, for example, Cowan et al, 2005 and UEMS, 2011) where competences are a complex (and interacting) combination of skills, knowledge and personal attributes.

Skills and competences framework (CfWI, 2014)
Methodology

Horizon scanning has been conducted by a network consisting of WP6 partners led by the CfWI, in collaboration with the UK Department of Health.

**Focal question:** ‘Thinking up to the year 2035, what are the key driving forces that will influence the skills and competences required in the health workforce?’

56 interviews, 264 drivers, over 6000 data items coded, visualised and processed as part of the work.
Methodology

The system map may be further analysed to build an understanding of the system’s characteristics.

The variables identified in the system map can be allocated in relation to one of four key roles – active, reactive, buffering and critical (Vester, 2012).

The matrix displays the variable by influence and therefore their role in the system, showing that factors outside of current conceptions of workforce planning, such as ‘health literacy’, have important active effects.
Future skills and competences - report and briefs

JA HWF DELIVERABLE 062
To simplify the complex system described in the report, drivers of change are considered in terms of one of three inter-related areas (as below), where change in one area causes changes in the others.

Populations

Health care services

Health workforces

JA HWF HORIZON SCANNING BRIEFINGS
These briefings summarise the information contained in the longer report for a wider audience.

1. Horizon scanning and workforce planning
2. Populations
3. Health care services
4. Health workforces
High-level drivers of change identified out to 2035

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...which have implications to skills and competences
Populations

Skills and competence implications

- **Prevention** – ‘the ability to reduce the instance or incidence of ill health and social health’ (CfWI, 2014).

- **Coaching and health promotion** – ‘engaging and empowering individuals and communities to engage in healthy behaviours, and make changes that reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases and other morbidities’ (WHO, 2015).

- **Multi-disciplinary team working** that includes a range of ‘different professional groups, deliver[ing] higher quality patient care and implement[ing] more innovations in patient care’ (Borrill et al, 2013).

Examples of possible impacts to the workforce as shared by respondents

- **Nurses** as well as health and care professions are likely to require an increased breadth of clinical and caring competence for increasingly prevalent diseases such as Alzheimer’s and other long term conditions in the population.

- **Dentists** may require top-up education and continuing professional development in geriatric dentistry or gerodontology in order to better provide for the needs of an increasingly older population as well as wider health promotion and preventative skillsets for the young and middle age bands.

Continued in horizon scanning brief which includes examples of workforce impacts, education and training, workforce planning considerations.
Health care services

Skills and competence implications

- **Information interpretation skills** resulting from developments in eHealth may increasingly have wide ranging impacts on patients, the workforce and health systems (EFN, 2014).

- An awareness of, and detailed **genetic assessment and treatment skills**, will be an important for the workforces involved in assessment, diagnosis and treatment. The scope of workforces may also expand to new genetic advisory and therapy health professionals as part of multi-disciplinary teams.

Examples of possible impacts to the workforce as shared by respondents

- **All workforces** may see telehealth enhance roles, especially community-based assistant practitioners, GPs and pharmacists who may work together with patients in hub and spoke models respectively.

- **All health professionals** will have to possess flexible healthcare skills (or new roles may be needed) to allow them to enter and exit multiple teams as required.

Continued in horizon scanning brief which includes examples of workforce impacts, education and training, workforce planning considerations.
Health care workforce

Skills and competence implications

- **Resilience** – The health workforce faces many changes ahead driving increases in resilience and coping skills. Changes in health systems, populations, patient expectations, technologies and innovations over the next 20 years will drive increases.

- **Regulatory awareness and revalidation skills** – Health care professionals working in the EU face differing regulatory and re-certification changes as revalidation becomes more prevalent in Europe’s health systems.

- **Systems thinking and workforce planning skills and competence** will be areas of increased demand for the future. The interconnectedness of how health systems operate, their complexity and how they interact have implications for the achievement of equitable health outcomes (Adam, 2012).

Examples of possible impacts to the workforce as shared by respondents

- For **all workforces** there is a risk of fewer professionals in the future due to poor working conditions, pressures and restrictions on working time that can impact the time professionals have to gain experience to gain and keep their competence.

- **Midwives** are affected in some member states by societal trends towards individual responsibilities in insurance and finances. High insurance premiums for midwives significantly reduce income and will reduce the amount of service they choose to provide.

Continued in horizon scanning brief which includes examples of workforce impacts, education and training, workforce planning considerations.
Summary of messages

- The work shares the methods used to conduct horizon scanning and provides tools – such as a system map to understand the dynamic nature of future change – which can be adapted to conduct and improve workforce planning in national-specific contexts.

- The report describes the variables and the relationships involved in workforce systems, highlighting the drivers of change to populations, health care services and health workforces. This qualitative understanding is best combined with quantitative modelling in national-specific contexts to project the relative size and uncertainty of workforce supply and demand pressures.

- The future of workforce planning must include multi-professional projections which effectively inform decision making by linking to appropriate policy decisions and combining qualitative and quantitative approaches.
Report and briefs

Horizon scanning for the Joint Action on Health Workforce Planning and Forecasting has identified a number of issues relating to the future health and competences of the European health workforce. This briefing summarises the key drivers acting on populations and the potential skills and competences implications.

The key drivers are:
- Socio-economic context
- Health needs and demands
- Technological developments
- Health workforce structure

These drivers have an important impact on the health workforce and need to be considered when planning for the future. Further implications of the key drivers will be explored in future briefings.

Drivers of change to the skills and competences of the future health workforce in Europe: Health care services

Drivers of change for the Joint Action on Health Workforce Planning and Forecasting have identified a number of issues relating to the future health and competences of the health workforce in the European Union. This briefing summarises the key drivers acting on health care services and their potential skills and competences implications.

Will be available at www.healthworkforce.eu in 2016
Acknowledgements

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Questions welcomed.