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Summary

Education of endoscopy nurses in Europe – 30 years and still not standardised

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Nurses

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The speaker reviewed efforts to harmonise endoscopy nursing education across Europe, highlighting persistent challenges including lack of EU-wide specialist recognition, variable course structures ranging from one-week programs to master's degrees, and barriers to advanced roles driven by differing healthcare systems and financial constraints.

KEY POINTS

- A European curriculum for endoscopy nursing was developed in 2008 based on four modules, and countries like Croatia, Switzerland, and Portugal used it to establish new courses, though implementation varies widely from 60 to 150 credits and from vocational training to university master's degrees.
- Endoscopy nursing is not recognised as a specialisation across Europe, and only five countries currently permit nurse endoscopists, with the speaker noting a European statement recommending one-year university-level training for this advanced role.
- In Germany, the speaker stated it took more than 15 years to achieve official recognition for specialist courses, and a two-year course costs around €10,000, with recognised specialists automatically receiving higher salary and access to advanced roles.
- Around 40% of surveyed departments reported vacancies and staff shortages, with an ageing workforce of baby boomers nearing retirement, though the speaker cited a study showing high job satisfaction and lower burnout risk compared to medical staff.
- Countries with insurance-based health systems (Bismarck model) have fewer advanced nursing roles because self-employed doctors have financial interest in performing procedures themselves, whereas national systems like the UK's allow more government-mandated role expansion.

– The speaker emphasized that harmonisation remains difficult due to financial and political power dynamics, stating that recognition costs money through higher salaries and that nurses must demonstrate their indispensable value and advocate more assertively for specialist status.

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