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Aging of society/physicians

Both are aging.

Albanian society is aging because of:

- Increased percentage of the elderly (*over 65 years old, 13% of population*).
- Increased life expectancy (78 years).
- Low Birth rate.
- The emigration of young people (around 1 million Albanians live abroad)

What do we need to do?

- Increasing and improving facilities where the elderly live;
- Restructuring geriatric services;
- Increasing volunteering help to elderly.

The average age of active physicians is growing:

- Increasing the retirement age (60 for women- 65 for men);
- Working beyond retirement age (economic conditions, the health service needs).
- The emigration of physicians (2014-2015 about 300 physicians/ January 2016 till now 100 physicians, mostly young ones).

Why do they live?

- Better working conditions and lifestyle;
- Better salaries;
- Better professional career opportunities;
- Difficulties and mismanagement of health services make harder the practice of physician profession.

The role of OPA

- Finding out and specifying the problem (at national and regional level);
- Raising the awareness of specific structures and policymakers to assess and react appropriately to the worrying problem;
- Currently, reaction is inadequate (excuse: the human rights).

The remuneration of physicians in private practice

- Private practice of physicians is the novelty of the past two decades;
- Every physician can exercise the profession in private services: - part time (when working in public services)
 - full time (when working only in their private clinics)
- Restrictions (to avoid abuses):
 - Who manages a health care public service, is not allowed to manage even a single private healthcare service.
 - Who works in a public hospital is not allowed to work in a private hospital as well.

The remuneration of physicians in private practice.

- Prices of services are set by the private health structures;
- Most of the population consider them high ones;
- Based on contracts of employment, physicians receive about 30% of the service price (the rest is taken by state and the owners of these structures).
- Currently, neither the state, nor OPA don't interfere with the economic aspects of the private health structures (they are taxed like other businesses).

The remuneration of physicians in private practice

- OPA has the same requirements regardless of where physicians work (both in public as well as in private);
- Licensing conditions and criteria;
- Respect of medical ethics and professional standards;
- It takes the same disciplinary measures after professional disciplinary proceedings.

Violation of privacy of physicians from media

- Democratic changes after 1990 in Albania brought also an increase in the number of media (written and TV);
- Media law;
- Journalist Code of Ethics;
- To survive, media violates the Code of Ethics, misinterprets the law and violates the privacy of everyone (physicians are no exception).

Violation of privacy of doctors from media

- In two “investigative-satirical” TV programs, they speculate with public interest and interesting for the public.
- Recording with hidden cameras;
- Collection of information and records to health services without introducing him/herself as journalist;
- The day after the show, OPA or State Administration are contacted for support on the issue and asked about the disciplinary measures to be taken. The prosecution is also invited to raise criminal charges.

Violation of privacy of physicians from media

OPA reaction:

- We try to explain the ethical norm or professional standard of the case.
- TV interviews or conversations;
- Press statements or different articles;
- Media is hard and strong. It offends publicly, apologizes individually.

How are the disciplinary procedures handled in OPA

- Disciplinary commissions, which are determined by the respective councils, are created near to the National Council and regional councils of the Order of Physicians of Albania.
- The disciplinary commissions are parts of the professional judgment, (*the file of cases are prepared by regional councils*). They verify and examine the complaints of the violation of medical ethics, Medical Ethics & Deontological Code, and the medical mistakes of the members of the Order of Physicians of Albania.
- The disciplinary commissions near to the regional councils exercise disciplinary competencies of the first degree. Their decisions can be appealed by Disciplinary Commission of the National Council, which exercises disciplinary competencies of the second degree.

How are the disciplinary procedures handled in OPA

OPA- takes action and makes disciplinary hearing of its professional members in the following cases:

- When professional competence or performance of a physician has serious deficiencies.
- When there is a charge of careless treatment or professional indecent behavior.
- When a doctor is convicted by the judicial authorities.
- When due to his health condition, the doctor becomes disabled and irresponsible to practice the profession.
- When the doctor refuses to implement the decisions, orders, instructions arising from the Order of Physicians, or reject the submission of his / her when required in any instance by the Order.

How are the disciplinary procedures handled in OPA

Complaints against doctors can come from:

- Patient, family and relatives of patients, other citizens;
- Members of the Order of Physicians;
- Leading medical institutions or social-health;
- Public administration bodies;
- Minister of Health and President of the National Council of OPA.

How are the disciplinary procedures handled in OPA

The main roles of the Disciplinary Commission of the Professional Judgment in connection with cases reported by the Regional Councils:

- *Review and analysis;*
- *Judgment;*
- *Separation of functions of investigation and trial is mandatory;*
- *Disciplinary Commission does not investigate.*

How are the disciplinary procedures handled in OPA

- The Disciplinary Commission first grade takes decisions based on the facts and testimonies provided during the hearing session. When it verifies that the member has committed violations of the medical ethics, Medical Ethics & Deontological Code or has committed medical mistakes, the commission takes these disciplinary measures:
- **written warning**
- **warning for dismissal**
- **15000 up to 100 000 lek Fine**
- **proposal for discharge from leading position of health institutions.**
- **suspension of the right to be elected on the leading structures of the Order of Physicians of Albania for 3 years.**
- **temporary discharge from the Order of Physicians of Albania for 3 years.**
- **Besides the measures provided above, the Commission has the right to appoint doctors conducting additional studies equal to 20 credits.**

Thank you for your attention!