

German Medical Association

Federation of the German Chambers of Physicians



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Country report: Germany

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Country report: Germany

Introduction



- General elections September 2013
 - New Federal Minister of Health: Hermann Gröhe (CDU)

- Current topics of interest:
 1. Assisted suicide
 2. Medical language tests

Assisted suicide

Current situation



- Assisted suicide is not a crime in Germany
 - Only commercially organised assisted suicide is illegal
- Model Professional Code forbids physician assisted suicide:
Physicians must support the dying while preserving their dignity and respecting their wishes. They are forbidden to kill patients upon their request. They may not perform assisted suicide. (para. 16)
- Organised assisted suicide offered by “not-for-profit” companies
- Current topic of discussion & new law under consideration

Assisted suicide Proposed criminal regulation



- Position of German medical profession:
 - 2014 German Medical Assembly supported new law to criminalise organised & commercial assisted suicide
 - Palliative medicine provisions must be expanded
 - There should be no provisions in criminal law pertaining to physician assisted suicide – professional law is sufficient

- “Law on Assisted Suicide” to be debated in German parliament next year

Medical language tests

Current situation



- April 2012: New law to facilitate recognition of non-EU professional qualifications
 - Migration of physicians to Germany made easier
- Proof of sufficient language skills required as part of application for medical licence by physicians from abroad
- Individual federal states (*Länder*) responsible for issuing medical licences
 - Currently no common standard for assessing language skills = variations in requirements across Germany

Medical language tests

Key issues paper



- June 2014: Key issues paper on assessment of German language skills approved by state health ministers
 - Medical language tests can be carried out by state chambers of physicians
 - General language requirements: Level B2 of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
 - Medical language requirements: Level C1

- Alternative proof of language skills:
 - Medical degree completed in German language
 - 3 years of professional training completed in German language
 - 10 years of general schooling completed in German language

Medical language tests

Procedure & content



➤ Structure (60 mins):

- Simulated physician-patient consultation (20 mins)
- Discussion with another physician (20 mins)
- Composition of typical medical text, e.g. letter of referral (20 mins)

➤ Assessment:

- Language rather than medical knowledge assessed
- Result valid throughout Germany
- At least 2 examiners, ½ physicians

→ Progress towards standardisation of language requirements in Germany



Thank you!

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