

Skintherapy conquers Europe

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This article is based on literature search and will give information about the Estonian healthcare system, the Hospital Master Plan 2015 and the different paramedic disciplines. Also the conclusions from the literature search will be discussed. Before the investigators began to write their bachelor thesis they had the opportunity to go to Estonia to accomplish an internship that lasted for one month. There they got acquainted with the Estonian healthcare system, the patients, doctors and nursing staff. They noticed that a lot of patients would benefit from skintherapy treatments. Because of this experience the idea came to life to write their bachelor thesis about international integration of skintherapy. The central question of the research is: Can the profession skintherapist take a relevant and useful place within the present Estonian healthcare system?

Introduction

From 1945 till 1991 Estonia belonged to the Sovjet-Union and had to live according to their vision in all areas. In 2004 Estonia has become a part of the European Union and tries hard to upgrade their country to the West-European standards. Integration of the profession skintherapist would be a great addition to the present and new Estonian healthcare system. The profession skintherapist is still in its infancy in Holland as well as in the rest of Europe. This profession, in 2001 lawfully registered, has begun its journey of becoming widely known in Holland. The fact that doctors and specialists are sending their patients to the skintherapist confirms that there is a demand for this profession. Unfortunately there are no signs of international acknowledgement. The only other countries who have integrated skintherapists are at this moment Belgium and Germany. In the rest of Europe medical and paramedical professions are not informed about developments within the paramedical circuit in one of their neighbouring countries. During our stay in Estonia we experienced this ourselves. After we explained the profession and its treatments the paramedical professions became enthusiastic. Because of this we started to investigate if the profession skintherapist, as well as the treatments, can be integrated within the Estonian healthcare system.

The heart of the matter

Before Estonia became a part of the Sovjet-Union its healthcare system was comparable with the healthcare system of the West-European countries. The university at Tartu, founded in 1639, became the most leading education for doctors and it gave structure to the healthcare system. In the time of the Sovjet-Union the healthcare system changed into a very expensive form of care, which was financed by the state and completely dependent on specialists. At this moment Estonia is rearranging the healthcare system to the standards and demands of the European Union. These changes will take place by way of the Estonian Hospital Master Plan 2015. This document emphasizes improving the hospitals and hospital care to extend life. Integration of the skintherapy treatments would be a great addition in relation to the Estonian Hospital Master Plan 2015. Until the healthcare system is rearranged Estonia relies at its present healthcare insurance company, Haigekassa. Haigekassa is a social insurance company that finances primary and secondary healthcare for the population of Estonia, employed or unemployed. The employer pays taxes for every employee. This is 30% of the salary from which 10% is reserved for Haigekassa. The financing and integration of the skintherapy treatments would probably go through Haigekassa. If, for some reasons, this is not an option the skintherapy treatments could be integrated within an already existing profession. The investigators have

studied a few professions who would be capable of offering these treatments. These professions are: Nurse, Physical therapist and Fysiatra (a specialization to treat skin problems). Fysiatra is the most relevant because of the similarities in education.

Conclusions

The conclusion is; that the profession skintherapy can take a relevant and useful place within the present Estonian healthcare system. The following items will confirm this:

- At this moment Estonia is rearranging its healthcare system to de standards and demands of the European Union. These changes will be taken place by way of the Estonian Hospital Master Plan 2015. This document emphasizes improving the hospitals and hospital care to extend life. Integration of the skintherapy treatments would be a great addition in relation to the Estonian Hospital Master Plan 2015.

- Haigekassa is a social insurance company and finances primary and secondary healthcare for the population of Estonia, employed or unemployed.
- If integration of the profession skintherapist is not an option the skintherapy treatments can be integrated within an already existing profession. Fysiatra is the most relevant because of the similarities in education.

Epilogue

I would like to thank my colleague F.M. van Kuijeren for her great cooperation and the splendid time we had in Estonia. This was a lifetime experience which I will always cherish. Also a word of thanks to the people who made this internship possible and who gave us their professional help with the writing of our bachelor thesis.

Literature

For the relevant literature see Bachelor thesis: International Integration Skintherapy, by the authors M.M. Bolte and F.M. van Kuijeren, February 2007.