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Education of physical and rehabilitation medicine specialists across Europe: a call for harmonization

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BACKGROUND: Physical and rehabilitation medicine (PRM) is well established in Europe and officially recognized by the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS). The European PRM Board works to promote patient safety and quality of care through the development of the highest standards of medical training and healthcare across Europe as well as the harmonization of PRM specialists' qualifications. In its Action Plan for 2014-2018, the UEMS PRM Board has included the harmonization of the PRM curriculum among the EU countries, as one of its main goals. Based on a European Directive, the Belgian Superior Council is envisaging a reform of the PRM curriculum.

AIM: The aim of this paper is to present the current situation of PRM education in Europe according to the survey carried out by the Belgium Task Force.

DESIGN: An online survey was posted on May 3rd 2015 to all delegates of the UEMS PRM Section and Board. Two questions were formulated: 1) What is the duration and curriculum of PRM training in your country? 2) Does a



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Postgraduate Rehabilitation training exist for other medical specialties?

RESULTS: The majority of the PRM training programs in Europe have a duration ranging from 4 to 5 years, and are not aiming at downsizing the duration to the European minimal training period of 3 years. The vast majority (70%) of the responding countries don't offer an additional accreditation of Rehabilitation for other medical specialties.

CONCLUSIONS: Comparing PRM training programs in Europe can support the long-awaited reform of the PRM postgraduate curriculum in Belgium and gives perspective to agree on a transparent and comparable specialty training throughout Europe. Providing a more comparable training promotes the establishment of PRM and its rehabilitation service provisions in the world.

KEY WORDS: Physical and rehabilitation medicine - Education - Europe - Curriculum

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