EQUANU - EQUALITY IN SOCIETAL AND PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION OF NURSES

Background
Healthcare institutions are experiencing increasing difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified nurses. The poor public image of the profession and the professional recognition of nurses themselves may underlie this.

Aims
To identify differences in societal recognition of nurses, as well as their professional recognition by advanced roles in pharmaceutical care (especially prescription management) in European countries, taking into account differentiation in function per country.

Methods
A cross-sectional study design was conducted. Both nurses of different educational levels and the general public were surveyed between November 2022 and May 2023. The public's recognition of nurses and possible influencing factors, as well as views on nurses' job content were compared across nine countries. Nurses' work environment, job motivation and degree of perceived autonomy in tasks related to prescribing were mapped and correlated with demographics and level of education.

Results
A total of 1616 participants from the broad public (societal recognition) and 2361 nurses (professional recognition) took part. Characteristics attributed to nurses were: friendly, warm, empathic, female, scientific, compassionate. Mean score for socio-economic prestige of nurses was 6.6 on 10 (SD 2.6). When comparing prestige scores between nine countries, Slovenians gave the lowest score (5.3/10) and Portuguese citizens gave the highest score (7.5/10; $p<0.001$). In contrast, in Portugal the highest percentage of nurses (89%) did perceive low professional recognition, compared to 55% of the Slovenian nurses ($p<0.001$). Overall, nurses' responsibility level in prescription related tasks was 'not allowed'.

Discussion
Societal recognition of the nursing profession scored average compared to other professions but differences between countries were found. Professional recognition by nurses themselves was rated as low by the majority, with no difference between educational levels.

Implications and future perspectives
A benchmark between countries can help nurses in countries with lower levels of recognition to strive for a better recognition, with potential benefits for quality of care. More equality can be supportive for labour mobility for the European nurse.

References
1. ten Hoeve, Jansen, Roodbol. The nursing profession: public image, self-concept and professional identity. A discussion paper. J Adv Nurs. 2014;70(2).
2. Berckmans et al. Functiedifferentiatie in de verpleegkundige zorg in het ziekenhuis: mogelijkheden en beperkingen. KCE. 2008;86 A.

CARE4 International Scientific Nursing and Midwifery Conference 2024
5–6 February 2024, Antwerp
University of Antwerp, Campus Drie Eiken
www.care4-2024.org