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**Summary:**

- **Matron could be casualty of push for male nurses, says RCN chief Janet Davies**
- **Vaccination: Commission calls for stronger EU cooperation against preventable diseases**
- **Data in the EU: Commission steps up efforts to increase availability and boost healthcare data sharing**

A very interesting article about the evolution of the jargon in our profession, that explains how the proportion of men and women choosing Nursing from an early age impact on our terminology. Could you kindly let us know what is the case in your countries?

## **Matron could be casualty of push for male nurses, says RCN chief Janet Davies**

Nursing should reconsider its use of “female” job titles such as ward sister or matron to attract more men, the head of the profession’s union has said.

Janet Davies, chief executive of the Royal College of Nursing, said that stereotypes were putting men off the career from an early age.

Delegates at the union’s annual conference in Belfast were told that men were an “untapped resource” at a time when the NHS is short of 43,000 nurses.



Primary school dressing-up boxes should have nurse outfits for boys as well as girls, to attract more men into nursing, Ms Davies said, and television channels should include more male nurses, such as Casualty’s Charlie Fairhead, in their shows.

Men represent only 11 per cent of registered nurses and there are fears that reforms to training bursaries could result in that number falling further. Male nurses are more likely to have entered the profession later in life, at which stage they may be more reluctant to take on or add to student debt.

Ms Davies said there was a need to get rid of the concept of nursing as “woman’s work”, which went “hand in hand with gender stereotyping more widely”. If a gender was not specified, nurses were automatically thought of as “she”, she said.

Asked whether she thought that the term “ward sister” was outdated, she said: “It probably is. We use the term ward sister because there was a vote on that at some point but they’re not called ‘ward sisters’ in Scotland: everyone is called a ‘charge nurse’, regardless of their sex. And that’s another good debate.”

The term “matron”, she said, had similar problems, adding: “Lots of the language in nursing generally is very female.”

She added: “It’s a debate in itself really about the whole language; should you be called something different? You’re a charge nurse, you’re a sister — is that right or should everybody be called a charge nurse?”

Ms Davies’s comments came despite nurses at the conference rejecting calls for the RCN to target men for recruitment into the profession. Stephen Mckenna, championing the proposals, said that he had gone into a class of five-year-old children to speak about his career in nursing.

“I spent most of the morning being asked why I wasn’t a doctor, and why I wasn’t dressed as the nurse from Peppa Pig,” he said. “If little boys have that impression at five years old, how likely is it that they will ever see themselves as a nurse in the future?”

Other nurses argued that recruitment campaigns should address diversity issues more widely, and pointed out that the profession has been accused of sexual discrimination against women, with men being disproportionately represented in top jobs.

Ms Davies said it was important to target children of primary school age, before gender stereotypes around working as a nurse had a chance to bed in.

She said: “Certainly dressing up clothes — nursing uniforms for men — should be there in the children’s boxes.”

She said that soap operas could boost awareness of the variety of work nurses did, as well as showing more men in the career: “We need more Charlies but shown in lots of places, in the community, in different settings — I think that would help.”

### **Women’s work?**

- **Matrons:** Modern matrons are in charge of a group of hospital wards. They take responsibility for patient safety in their parts of the hospital and play a role in controlling budgets. The name is believed to derive from the Latin for “mother”.
- **Ward sisters:** Manage an individual ward and are responsible for care and managing staff working there. Nurses are referred to as sisters in a throwback to the time when much care was delivered by nuns.

The European Commission recently published a number of recommendations about how the EU can prevent some diseases by vaccines and a better cooperation between Member States.

## **Vaccination: Commission calls for stronger EU cooperation against preventable diseases**

Today, the Commission is issuing a set of recommendations for how the EU can strengthen cooperation in the fight against diseases that can be prevented by vaccines. This follows President Juncker's call, in his 2017 State of the Union address, for action to increase vaccination coverage and to ensure that everyone in the EU has access to vaccines.

Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis said: "Vaccination is one of the most powerful and cost-effective public health measures developed in the 20th century. As a medical doctor, I find it disheartening to witness children dying because of low uptake, vaccine hesitancy, or vaccine shortages. Infectious diseases are not confined within national borders. One Member State's immunisation weakness puts the health and security of citizens at risk across the EU. Cooperating in this area is in all of our interests. Protect our children, vaccinate!"

Vaccination saves between 1 and 3 million lives worldwide every year. According to the World Health Organisation, vaccines will save 25 million more lives in the coming decade. And yet, according to ECDC, several EU countries are facing unprecedented outbreaks of measles and a resurgence of other vaccine-preventable diseases due to insufficient vaccination coverage, and children and adults in the EU are still dying from these diseases.

The Commission's proposal focuses on 3 main pillars for action: tackling vaccine hesitancy and improving vaccination coverage; sustainable vaccination policies in the EU; and EU coordination and contribution to global health.

The proposal calls for 20 concrete actions by the Commission and Member States, including:

- Developing and **implementing national and/or regional vaccination plans** by 2020, including a target of at least 95% vaccination coverage for measles;
- Introducing **routine checks** of vaccination status and regular opportunities to vaccinate across different stages of life, for example in schools and workplaces;
- Presenting options for a common **vaccination card** that can be shared electronically across borders;
- Establishing a European **vaccination information portal** by 2019 to provide online objective, transparent and updated evidence on the benefits and safety of vaccines;

- Mitigating the risks of shortages by developing a virtual repository **EU data warehouse** with information on vaccine stocks and needs to facilitate voluntary exchange of information on available supplies and shortages of essential vaccines;
- Equipping all **healthcare workers** with the necessary training to confidently deliver vaccinations and address hesitant behaviours;
- Convening a **Coalition for Vaccination** to bring together European associations of healthcare workers as well as relevant students' associations in the field, to commit to delivering accurate information to the public, combating myths and exchanging best practice;
- Establishing a **European Information Sharing System** to gather knowledge and develop guidelines for a core EU vaccination schedule by 2020 with doses and ages that EU Member States agree as being common to all countries;
- Strengthening partnerships and collaboration on vaccination with **international partners**.

### **State of play: key vaccination gaps in the EU**

According to the most recent data collected by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), measles cases continue to increase in a number of EU and EEA countries. In the 12-month period between 1 March 2017 and 28 February 2018, 14,813 cases of measles were reported through the European Surveillance System. Of these cases, where vaccination status was known, 86% were unvaccinated. Furthermore, the ECDC estimates that at least 40,000 people die every year from influenza, partly due to low vaccination coverage.

### **Next steps**

The Commission's proposal for a Council recommendation will be discussed by the Council, with the aim of seeing it adopted before the end of 2018, with an immediate entry into force. Following this, every 3 years the Commission will report on progress made in the implementation of the recommendation. In addition the Commission will also produce a report on 'The State of Confidence in Vaccines in the EU', to monitor attitudes towards vaccination, in the context of the State of Health in the EU process.

### **Background**

In his 2017 State of the Union address, President Juncker said: "In a Union of equals, there can be no second class citizens. It is unacceptable that in 2017 there are still children dying

of diseases that should long have been eradicated in Europe. (...) No ifs, no buts. (...) Avoidable deaths must not occur in Europe."

The Commission's recommendations on vaccine-preventable diseases build on a number of existing EU policies and projects in area of vaccination. These include the 2009 Council Recommendation on seasonal influenza vaccination, the Joint Procurement Agreement, established by the serious cross-border health threats Decision (1082/2013/EU), and a Joint Action on vaccination co-funded by the Health Programme 2014-2020, which will start in the months to come, addressing vaccine hesitancy amongst other topics.

Please find below a communication from the European Commission that we thought would be of interest to you, especially currently with the entry into force of the new European regulation concerning the data protection: the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

## **Data in the EU: Commission steps up efforts to increase availability and boost healthcare data sharing**

The WHO Today, the European Commission is putting forward a set of measures to increase the availability of data in the EU, building on previous initiatives to boost the free flow of non-personal data in the Digital Single Market.

Data-driven innovation is a key enabler of market growth, job creation, particularly for SMEs and startups, and the development of new technologies. It allows citizens to easily access and manage their health data, and allows public authorities to use data better in research, prevention and health system reforms.

Commission Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus Ansip said: "The Digital Single Market is rapidly taking shape; but without data, we will not make the most of artificial intelligence, high-performance computing and other technological advances. These technologies can help us to improve healthcare and education, transport networks and make energy savings: this is what the smart use of data is all about. Our proposal will free up more public sector data for re-use, including for commercial purposes, driving down the cost of access to data and helping us to create a common data space in the EU that will stimulate our growth."

Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya Gabriel added: "With today's Communication we are pursuing an ambitious plan, the Digital Single Market Strategy, to make sure that we are in the best possible position to help our businesses, provide top-class research, and protect EU citizens. Citizens and businesses will have access to better products and services as more and more data become available for data-driven innovation."

Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis said: "Our proposals make use of the full potential of digital technologies to improve healthcare and medical research. This will lead to easier access to health data, which will lead to better disease prevention and patient-centred care, rapid responses to pandemic threats, and improved treatments."

Today's proposals build on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which will enter into application as of 25 May 2018. They will ensure:

- Better access to and reusability of public sector data: A revised law on Public Sector Information covers data held by public undertakings in transport and utilities sectors. The new rules limit the exceptions that allow public bodies to charge more than the

marginal costs of data dissemination for the reuse of their data. They also facilitate the reusability of open research data resulting from public funding, and oblige Member States to develop open access policies. Finally, the new rules require – where applicable – technical solutions like Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to provide real-time access to data.

- Scientific data sharing in 2018: A new set of recommendations address the policy and technological changes since the last Commission proposal on access to and preservation of scientific information. They offer guidance on implementing open access policies in line with open science objectives, research data and data management, the creation of a European Open Science Cloud, and text and data-mining. They also highlight the importance of incentives, rewards, skills and metrics appropriate for the new era of networked research.
- Private sector data sharing in business-to-business and business-to-governments contexts: A new Communication entitled “Towards a common European data space” provides guidance for businesses operating in the EU on the legal and technical principles that should govern data sharing collaboration in the private sector.
- Securing citizens' healthcare data while fostering European cooperation: The Commission is today setting out a plan of action that puts citizens first when it comes to data on citizens' health: by securing citizens' access to their health data and introducing the possibility to share their data across borders; by using larger data sets to enable more personalised diagnoses and medical treatment, and better anticipate epidemics; and by promoting appropriate digital tools, allowing public authorities to better use health data for research and for health system reforms. Today's proposal also covers the interoperability of electronic health records as well as a mechanism for voluntary coordination in sharing data – including genomic data – for disease prevention and research.

### **Next steps**

The Commission is calling on the European Parliament and the Council to adopt today's proposals for revised rules on Public Sector Information. In addition, the Commission will also set up a high-level round-table to discuss private sector data sharing in the business-to-government context during the second half of 2018 and the first half of 2019.

### **Background**

The value of the European data economy was €300 billion in 2016. If the right legislative and policy measures are put in place, this value could grow to up to €739 billion by 2020, 4% of the EU's GDP.



In the EU, the reuse of data generated by public sector bodies (e.g. legal, traffic, meteorological and financial etc.) for commercial and non-commercial purposes is governed by Directive 2003/98/EC on the re-use of public sector information. In 2012, the Commission adopted a policy package containing a series of measures to improve access to scientific information in Europe, including the Recommendation on access to and preservation of scientific information that resulted from public funding. Between January and June 2017, the Commission held a stakeholder dialogue on the Communication on Building a European data economy, finding a strong support for non-regulatory measures to maximise and organise access to and reuse of data in business-to-business contexts. On the digital transformation of healthcare, a public consultation finishing in October 2017 investigated the need for policy measures promoting digital innovation for better healthcare in Europe.

Today's initiatives complement the framework for the free flow of non-personal data in the EU presented by the Commission in September 2017 and which still needs to be agreed by the European Parliament and Member States.

**SOURCES:**

- The Times 15<sup>th</sup> May
- The European Commission 25<sup>th</sup> April
- The European Commission 26<sup>th</sup> April