



Luxembourg  
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## CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

### 'Building a Strategy for Patient Safety in Europe'

Luxembourg, 18-19 September 2006

On 18 and 19 September 65 patient safety experts from 13 European countries met in Luxembourg to gather and discuss the preliminary results of the SIMPATIE project and to draw first conclusions for a strategy framework for patient safety in Europe.

The SIMPATIE project is funded by the European Commission with the objective to assist in improving the safety of patients throughout all European countries. At the conference, representatives of the European wide network of organizations, experts, patients, professionals, and other stakeholders involved in the project, presented the preliminary results of the different work packages (WP's). These WPs included a mapping exercise with the first overview of current patient safety activities in most Member States, a common European vocabulary and a set of indicators, internal and external instruments for the improvement of safety in healthcare organisations, as well as on a national and European level.

The conference participants applauded the initiative of the High Level Group on Patient Safety to move to set up a patient safety network in Europe involving all Member States.

It was agreed that such a network would have an important role as a coordinating body in Europe, to share knowledge and solutions between the Member States and stakeholders; e.g. by introducing a solutions bank on a European level. As it was agreed that the voice of the patients was paramount in the process, it was stressed that patient safety activities must involve all relevant stakeholders, especially patients, patient organizations, acute and long term health care providers, healthcare professionals and insurers.





The role of a possible involvement of the media as a further stakeholder in the process was briefly discussed.

It is further recommended that national platforms should be introduced to reach a harmonization on national level and to adapt proposed approaches to the different national and local systems. Annual reports by the Ministries of Health were suggested as an additional method to actively involve the Member States in the process by maintaining the profile of patient safety at a national level. To ensure the comparability of results the need for a clear vocabulary and a common inventory of patient safety indicators, e.g. as presented by the SIMPATIE consortium, was stressed by the participants.

Regarding reporting and risk management systems, discussions mainly focused on their scope and format, including the relevance of insurance schemes to provide compensation, and the meaning of open-and-fair systems in practice. The importance of adequate competencies, state-of-the-art education, appropriate human resources and a real culture of safety were mentioned as prerequisites for patient safety on national and local levels. The value of investment in patient safety should therefore be highlighted for Member States and healthcare providers, thus demonstrating that there is a sound business case for introducing patient safety interventions to healthcare organizations.

A common set of indicators and instruments for internal and external evaluation would contribute to producing the necessary economic evidence. However the tools must be practical and easy to implement within healthcare organisations.

It was also noted that the issue of clinical governance needs to be included in the process, especially to give hospital managers a



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framework for the tools to improve patient safety within their organizations.

Improved multidisciplinary team work among healthcare professionals is seen as a potential solution to the growing demand for cost-effectiveness leading to an increasing volume of treatment.

In general the conference affirmed the relevance of and willingness for a change in culture, a fact that was expressed by the general feeling of impatience and the desire for action, notwithstanding the recognition for the need for further discussion on a European level. Given awareness and the necessity for action being generally recognized, the logical next step would be the development and implementation of the right tools to ensure patient safety at all levels.

Based on the experience of the project contributors together with the different views expressed in the workshops and during the plenary sessions, a strategy framework document will be prepared and published in December 2006. Comments on the current draft strategy framework as presented and discussed in Luxembourg will be welcomed prior to 1 October 2006.

To express views on the different issues raised, comments can be given via the SIMPATIE website ([www.simpatie.org](http://www.simpatie.org)).

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