Date last modification documentation sheet: 18-04-2012

Compared to previous version documentation sheet (02-12-2011) the following issues were adapted: - New section on relevant policy areas added to the documentation sheet

Compared to previous version documentation sheet (15-07-2010) the following issues were adapted: - Indicator title adapted to better match the indicator operationalisation

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 Calculation updated according to new metadata Eurostat/WHO/OECD joint data collection
- Link to Eurostat meta-data 'Health care resources (non-expenditure data) updated

ECHIM Indicator	D) Health interventions: health services
name	63. Practising physicians
Relevant policy areas	 Sustainable health care systems Health inequalities (including accessibility of care) Health system performance, quality of care, efficiency of care, patient safety (Planning of) health care resources Health in All Policies (HiAP)
Definition	The total number of practising physicians (medical doctors) per 100,000 inhabitants.
Calculation	 The total number of practising physicians (medical doctors) by 31 December of a given calendar year, per 100,000 inhabitants (end of year population). Practising physicians provide services directly to patients. Practising physicians include: Persons who have completed studies in medicine at university level (granted by adequate diploma) and who are licensed to practice Interns and resident physicians (with adequate diploma and providing services under supervision of other medical doctors during their postgraduate internship or residency in a health care facility) Salaried and self-employed physicians delivering services irrespectively of the place of service provision Foreign physicians licensed to practice and actively practising in the country. For a more detailed definition: see references (definitions on health care statistics (non-expenditure data), available in CIRCA).
Relevant dimensions and subgroups	 Calendar year Country Region (according to ISARE recommendations; see data availability)
Preferred data type and data source	Preferred data type: - Administrative sources Preferred source: - Eurostat
Data availability	Data are available for the EU-27 (except Ireland, Greece, France, Italy and Malta), Croatia, Turkey, Iceland, and Norway. Annual data are available as of 1985, though for quite some countries data are only available as of the 1990s. For some countries there are also data for the years 1970 and 1980. Data on practising physicians by region are available in Eurostat (NUTS II level). The ISARE project on regional data has collected data on number of physicians (indicator: number of physicians per 100,000 population).
Data periodicity	Data are being updated annually. Eurostat asks Member States to deliver the data for year N at $N + 18$ months, but some Member States have difficulties with this time table and deliver the data at their earliest convenience.
Rationale	Indicator widely used in assessments of accessibility and efficiency of health care services. It describes availability of staff for the whole country and the distribution of staff across the country. Time trends may help to identify e.g. staff shortages due to demographic developments such as migration.
Remarks	 Practising physicians per 100,000 inhabitants also is one of the (context) indicators of the indicators of the health and long term care strand of the Social Protection Committee (Open Method of Coordination). Common definitions for the different categories of health care professionals were agreed

with OECD and WHO. Three different concepts are used to present the number of health care professionals: - 'practising', i.e. health care professionals providing services directly to patients; - 'professionals for whom their medical education is a prerequisite for the execution of the job; - 'licensed to ', i.e. health care professionals who are registered and entitled to practise as health care professionals. In the context of comparing health care services across Member States, Eurostat and ECHIM give preference to the concept <i>fractising'</i> , as it best describes the availability of health care resources. - Eurostat metadata: "Health care staff data refer to human resources available for providing health care services in the country, irrespective of the sector of employment (i.e. whether they are independent, employed by a hospital or any other health care provider)". - Eurostat metadata: "Some countries are unable to cover all providers of care (the inclusion of private providers seems particularly difficult) or are only able to provide data for selective regions." - Burostat metadata: "For health care staff, countries may use a central register for medical professionals, business registers or other forms of data collection (including sample surveys)". - Burostat data on health care staff are based on head count rather than on FTEs. The latter would provide a none precise estimate of available human resources. However, data availability is currently very limited. - The Eurostat data on physical resources). Publication of the (meta-jdata is expected shortly). References - Imposite database, Health personnel (excluding nursing and caring professionals) -		
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