

UPDATE OF PAEDIATRIC NURSING IN AUSTRIA

Some general information about nursing in Austria:

Until 1997 nurses in Austria were only assistants of the doctors and directly responsible to them.

The new law of 1997 gave the nurses a field of action with direct responsibility. It says that doctors can delegate defined activities but they are not any longer the bosses of the nurses.

In Austria there is a saying: Papier ist geduldig = paper doesn't blush.

I think you can imagine, it is a long way from writing down the law to put it into practice – nurses have to learn to bring the law into action - but we are working hard on that.

About Education:

If you want to become a nurse you don't need general qualification for university entrance.

Usually nursing education is not positioned on university or colleges of higher education. An applicant needs just 10 years of school.

The ministry of health is not willing to change these conditions in general, but gave the possibility to educate nurses on colleges of higher education. On the other hand, some nursing schools work together with universities. Both ways graduate with a bachelor degree.

There is also the possibility to study nursing science on university with a magister degree.

The problem is that you can study on university or colleges of higher education, but you don't have to.

We think it will last 10 to 20 years to bring nursing education to university level.

For paediatric nurses there are two ways:

A special three years program for paediatric nurses (2000 hours theoretical content and 2480 hours practical placement experiences).

The second way is to qualify as a general nurse (3 years program) and then it needs 1 year training to get the diploma for paediatric nursing (600 hours theoretical content and 1000 hours practical placement experiences).

We have a lot of applicants for the education in paediatric nursing but we have not enough places for training - so there is always a deficit of trained nurses.

There is no registration for nurses, so we don't know how many paediatric nurses are there in Austria – we assume about 3000 to 4000.

Austria has a high quality in paediatric nursing in hospitals. On the other hand, the financing of community care, health protection, evidence based nursing and so on is a problem.