University of Groningen

Harmonization of the neurological training across Europe and beyond is a challenge

de Visser, M.; Kuks, J. B. M.

Published in:
European Journal of Neurology

DOI:
[10.1111/ene.14323](https://doi.org/10.1111/ene.14323)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2020

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

de Visser, M., & Kuks, J. B. M. (2020). Harmonization of the neurological training across Europe and beyond is a challenge. *European Journal of Neurology*, 27(8), 1354-1355.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ene.14323>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

Harmonization of the neurological training across Europe and beyond is a challenge

See paper by N. N. Kleineberg et al. on page 1356

doi:10.1111/ene.14323

The burden of neurological disorders is increasing at a fast pace due to population growth and ageing. Therefore, the mission of the European Academy of Neurology (EAN) to foster and support the development of neurological excellence in Europe and across the world, leading to better patient care and outcomes, is urgent. This requires continuing medical education and professional development for all European neurologists. Knowledge transfer takes place through EAN's annual congress and peer-reviewed publications in the *European Journal of Neurology*. For residents, learning experiences during clinical fellowships in other countries and at Spring or Winter School are invaluable boosts to their professional development.

One of the main objectives of the European Union of Medical Specialties (UEMS) is to promote and harmonize the training of medical specialists within the European Union through a 'Charter on Training of Medical Specialists in Europe'. The UEMS Section of Neurology (UEMS-SN) has developed a 'core curriculum', officially known as the 'European Training Requirements for Neurology' with directions for essential knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours. A total training time of 5 years including a minimum of 4 years of clinical neurology is considered mandatory for full registration as a clinical neurologist. Training periods of up to 6 months spent in relevant clinical neuro-disciplines can be part of the 4 years of clinical neurology training. The additional fifth year may be dedicated to obtaining competences in neuro-radiology, clinical neurophysiology or psychiatry or to research.

In this journal issue Kleineberg *et al.* [1] report on the results of a survey that was distributed amongst national representatives of the Resident and Research Fellow Section of the EAN. The questionnaire included questions addressing various aspects of the training programme and examination. The main conclusion is that the variation in duration (12–72 months, mean 60) and content of the residency programmes is substantial. Rotations to other medical disciplines were mandatory as regards psychiatry (69%), internal medicine (66%) and neurosurgery (59%), albeit again with a variation in duration. In less than half of the countries, training

in evidence-based medicine, teaching skills and/or leadership qualities were part of the training programme. In many countries (75%), residents have to take an examination either during and/or at the end of the residency training. In half the countries, continuing medical training by following courses or visiting congresses for maintaining registration as a neurologist was mandatory.

Since apparently harmonization of neurological training is cumbersome, one could raise the question what endeavours could be undertaken to accomplish this? One option is to assess the ability of retrieval and application of knowledge and skills of neurologists through a European examination. The European Neurological Board Examination, initiated by UEMS-SN, celebrated its 11th edition in 2019. The examination is held at the venue of the EAN's annual congress and is open to residents and (early career) neurologists of the European Union but also beyond. Gradually the number of participants increases although there are as yet relatively few subscriptions from Western European countries. Other specialty organizations are much more successful in attracting candidates as apparently their National Societies consider the European examination equal to their own national examination. This might be stimulated more intensively by the EAN in collaboration with UEMS-SN.

Another option is the accreditation of training institutes to ensure that hospitals are implementing evidence-based practices for patient care. For as yet unexplained reasons, the neurology specialty is lagging behind other specialty organizations.

We agree with Kleineberg *et al.* that clear cut recommendations for the development of training programmes and organizational requirements with input from early career neurologists are crucial for harmonization of standards in high quality neurological healthcare.

M. de Visser^a and J. B. M. Kuks^b

^aDepartment of Neurology, Amsterdam University Medical Centres, Amsterdam and ^bDepartment of Neurology, University Medical Centre Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands (e-mail: m.devisser@amsterdamumc.nl)

Reference

1. Kleineberg NN, van der Meulen M, Franke C, *et al.* Differences in neurology residency training programmes across Europe – a survey amongst the Residents and Research Fellow Section of the European Academy of Neurology national representatives. *Eur J Neurol.* 2020; **27**: 1356–1373.