

EONS Cancer Nursing Index 2020©

National profile: Austria

Introduction

In the [RECaN project](#) EONS highlighted important differences in cancer nursing across Europe. The EONS Cancer Nursing Index 2020 (ECNI) was developed by the [EONS Advocacy Working Group](#) to illustrate the development and status of this profession in Europe. The index (with scores from 0-100) includes 22 items covering the following dimensions: Education and Career Development, Patient and Occupational Safety, Recognition, Working Conditions and Impact and Workforce statistics.

The Index is based on data from the following sources:

1. EONS Survey on Patient and Occupational Safety (anonymous survey, available in 9 languages, with at time for analysis, over 650 responses from cancer nurses in 38 countries)
2. Interviews with leading cancer nursing experts. Nurses from 38 of 42 invited countries participated
3. Work force statistics (from ec.europe.eu/Eurostat and OECD)

A scoring system was developed by EONS Advocacy Working Group to reflect the level of development for the different Index dimensions/items. For items with a variety of responses from the same country, the most frequently reported response was used. The purpose of the Index is primarily not to rank some countries as better than others but to illustrate cancer nursing profiles, differences and areas in need of development. The Index could be used in the development of cancer nursing in each country but also for general European progress.

Dimension/item	Maximum score	Mean score (min-max)	Austria	Comment
Overall score	100	48 (16 -78)	71	
Education and career development (5 items presented below)	23	9 (0-18)	11	
Specialist education on university level	5		5	
EONS Framework recognized/supported by Ministry of Education/Health	5		0	
Master programs in cancer nursing	4		4	
Advanced cancer nursing roles established	4		2	'Partly implemented' To obtain the highest score (4) for this item, advanced cancer nursing roles need to be fully implemented and recognized at a national level.
Professors in cancer nursing	4		0	
Patient and occupational safety (8 items presented below)	36	18 (3-36)	33	
Safety guidelines (cytotoxic drugs) available	5		5	
Guidelines during pregnancy (cytotoxic drugs)	5		5	
Pregnant and /or breastfeeding women assigned other tasks that don't involve direct contact with cytotoxic/radioactive drugs	5		5	
Systematic testing for occupational exposure (surface swipes)	3		3	
Speak-up or whistle blower policy implemented for all members of staff	3		0	To receive highest possible scores (3) for this item, nurses from all workplaces should have reported that a policy was in place.
Access to cytotoxic spillage kit and PPE	5		5	
Formal training before administering cytotoxic drugs	5		5	
Nurses not preparing cytotoxic drugs	5		5	
Working conditions and the Impact on cancer care (4 items presented below)	20	15 (3-19)	16	
Level of adherence to European Working Time Directive (EWTB)	5		2	'Yes, most often but exceptions occur'

				To obtain the highest score (5) for this item, all responding nurses from the country should have reported that the Directive was always followed.
Risk of negative consequences if asking for alternative duties pregnancy/breast feeding	5		5	
To what extent hospital beds are closed due to cancer nursing shortages	5		4	'It happens very rarely' To obtain the highest score (5) for this item, the responding nurses should have reported that it never happens.
To what extent cancer treatment delayed due to cancer nursing	5		5	
Recognition (4 items presented below)	18	8 (0-15)	10	
Does the country have a cancer nursing society?	5		5	
Does the country have a national cancer plan that includes nursing care?	3		3	
Does cancer centers in the country have Board positions dedicated for cancer nursing?	5		0	To obtain the highest score (5) for this item, the responding nurses should have reported that this is always the case.
To what extent is nurse-led cancer care implemented in the country?	5		2	'Partly implemented' To obtain the highest score (5) for this item, nurse-led care should be fully implemented and recognized at a national level
Work force statistics (1 item)	3	1 (0-3)	1	
Number of practicing nurses/1000 citizens (www.europe.eu/Eurostat and OECD)	3		1	To obtain the highest score (3) Austria should have >8 practicing nurses/1000 habitants.

Strengths and recommendations for improvements

Overall, Austria (total score 71) received high scores the ECNI 2020. Congratulations! Austria had the same total score as UK. Other countries with similar total scores were Finland (total score 70) and Germany (total score 72).

Austria were one of the countries with the highest scores in the dimension Patient and Occupational Safety. Only two other countries received higher scores (Germany and Belgium). The only item that could be improved related to safety is if whistle blower/speaking up policies were implemented at all workplaces.

Austria could improve their scores for the next revision of the ECNI in 2022 if advanced cancer nursing roles and nurse-led cancer care were implemented and recognized on a national level and also if Austria had appointed professors in cancer nursing. Finally, if all cancer centers had a dedicated board nursing position, if Austria's Minister of Health/Education would support EONS Cancer Nursing Education Framework and if the number of practicing nurses increased, the scores would also be higher.

EONS Advocacy Working Group, October 2020