

EONS Cancer Nursing Index 2020©

National profile: Denmark

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) which at the time of this analysis, included 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 (obtained from ec.europe.eu/Eurostat and OECD)

A scoring system was developed by the 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, moreover to illustrate cancer nursing profiles, differences and areas in need of development. The Index could be used to aid the development of cancer nursing in each country as well as for general European progress.

Dimension/item	Maximum score	Mean score (min-max)	Denmark	Comment
Overall score	100	48 (16 -78)	70	
Education and career development (5 items presented below)	23	9 (0-18)	15	
Specialist education on university level	5		5	
EONS Framework recognized/supported by Ministry of Education	5		0	
Master programs in cancer nursing	4		4	
Advanced cancer nursing roles established	5		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		4	
Patient and occupational safety (8 items presented below)	36	18 (3-36)	28	
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		2	'Sometimes' To obtain the highest scores (5) for this item pregnant/breast feeding women should be forbidden to perform task with risks for exposure to cytotoxic/radioactive drugs at all workplaces.
Systematic testing for occupational exposure (surface swipes)	3		1	'Sometimes' To receive highest possible scores (3) for this item testing should be systematically implemented at all workplaces.
Speak-up or whistle blower policy implemented for all members of staff	3		3	

Access to cytotoxic spillage kit and PPE	5		5	
Formal training before administering cytotoxic drugs	5		2	'Sometimes' To obtain the highest score (5) for this item, formal education should be obligatory before managing cytotoxic drugs at all workplaces.
Nurses not preparing cytotoxic drugs	5		5	
Working conditions and the Impact on cancer care (4 items presented below)	20	15 (3-19)	10	
Level of adherence to European Working Time Directive (EWTD)	5		4	'Yes, most of the time 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		2	'Sometimes' To obtain the highest score (5) for this item all responding nurses should have reported that there is no risk for negative consequences.
To what extent hospital beds are closed due to cancer nursing shortages	5		2	'It happens every month' 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		2	'It happens every week' To obtain the highest score (5) for this item, the responding nurses should have reported that it never happens.
Recognition (4 items presented below)	18	8 (0-15)	14	
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		1	'Some centers have' 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		5	
Work force statistics (1 item)	3	1 (0-3)	3	
Number of practicing nurses/1000 citizens (www.europe.eu/Eurostat and OECD)	3		3	

Strengths and recommendations for improvements

Overall, Denmark (total score 70) received relatively high scores the Cancer Nursing Index 2020. Congratulations! Other countries with similar total scores were Germany (total score 72), UK and Austria (both with total score 71). In comparison with the other Scandinavian countries, Denmark received higher scores than Iceland (total score 61), and slightly lower than and Sweden (total score 76) Norway (total score 73) and Finland (total score 71).

Denmark was one of only three countries (together with Sweden and UK) among the 38 countries, where cancer nurse led care was fully implemented and recognized on a national level. Denmark also received maximum score in Workforce statistics.

If advanced cancer nursing roles need to be fully implemented and recognized at a national level and If the Minister of Education/Health would support EONS Cancer Nursing Education Framework, Denmark would have completed the dimension on Education and Career Developments with full scores.

In the dimension on patient and occupational safety, Denmark also received fairly high scores. However, we found some areas of concern. Some responding Danish cancer nurses reported handling cytotoxic drugs during pregnancy and risks for negative consequences if asking for alternative duties. Denmark could improve the scores in the revision of The Cancer Nursing Index 2022, if formal education and occupational exposure testing for the management of cytotoxic drugs were systematically implemented at all workplaces and also if pregnant/breast feeding nurses would be forbidden to handle cytotoxic drugs at all workplaces.

EONS Advocacy Working Group, October 2020