# EONS Cancer Nursing Index 2020©

## National profile:  Lithuania

### Introduction

In the RECaN project EONS highlighted important differences in cancer nursing across Europe. EONS Cancer Nursing Index 2020 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.

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 time for this analysis had over 500 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) | Lithuania | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall score | 100 | 48 (16 -78) | 57 | |
| Education and career development (5 items presented below) | 23 | 9 (0-18) | 7 | |
| Specialist education on university level | 5 | | 5 | |
| EONS Framework recognized/supported by Ministry of Education | 5 | | 0 | |
| Master programs in cancer nursing | 4 | | 0 | |
| Advanced cancer nursing roles established | 4 | | 2 | 'Partly implemented' To obtain the highest scores (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) | 23 | |
| Safety guidelines (cytotoxic drugs) available | 5 | | 5 | |
| Guidelines during pregnancy (cytotoxic drugs) | 5 | | 2 | 'Some workplaces have' 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. |
| 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. |

| Item | Max | Mean (range) | Score | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Systematic testing for occupational exposure (surface swipes) | 3 | | 0 | Surface swipes were not reported by the Lithuanian nurses. 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 | | 2 | 'Some centers have' To obtain the highest score (3) for this item all nurses should have reported that policies are in place. |
| Access to cytotoxic spillage kit and PPE | 5 | | 2 | 'Sometimes' To obtain the highest score (5) for this item, all responding nurses should have reported that PPE are always available. |
| 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)** | **17** | |
| Level of adherence to European Working Time Directive (EWTD) | 5 | | 5 | |
| 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 | | 5 | |
| To what extent cancer treatment delayed due to cancer nursing | 5 | | 5 | |
| **Recognition (4 items presented below)** | **18** | **8 (0-15)** | **9** | |
| Does the country have a cancer nursing society? | 5 | | 0 | |
| Do 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 | | 5 | |
| To what extent is nurse-led cancer care implemented in the country? | 5 | | 1 | 'Planned' To obtain the highest score (5) for this item, nurse-led care should be fully implemented and recognized on 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) Lithuania should have >8 practicing nurses/1000 habitants. |

## Strengths and recommendations for improvements

The total score for Lithuania (score 57) were above total mean score (score 48) in the Cancer Nursing Index 2020. Other countries with the similar total score were Turkey (total score 50), Czech Republic (total score 54) and Iceland (total score 61).

Lithuania scored relatively high in Patient and Occupational safety and Working conditions. Congratulations! However, some cancer nurses in Lithuania report no guidelines and that they prepare cytotoxic during pregnancy/breast feeding. They also report risks of negative consequences if they ask for different duties during these circumstances. Personal Protection Equipment is not always available, and all workplaces do not have speak-up/whistle blower policies implemented. These conditions cause concern and jeopardizes both patient and occupational safety.

Lithuania could improve their scores in the revision of the Index in 2022, if advanced cancer nursing roles and nurse-lead care were fully implemented, if the number of practicing nurses increased and if the Lithuanian Minister of Health/Education would support EONS Cancer Nursing Education Framework.

Finally, if Lithuania had a national cancer nursing society, the scored would be higher. EONS would be more than happy to support any initiative to develop such society.

*EONS Advocacy Working Group, November 2020*