

EONS Cancer Nursing Index 2020©

National profile: Switzerland

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)	Switzerland	Comment
Overall score	100	48 (16 -78)	66	
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 Health/Education	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		4	
Patient and occupational safety (8 items presented below)	36	18 (3-36)	20	
Safety guidelines (cytotoxic drugs) available	5		5	
Guidelines during pregnancy (cytotoxic drugs)	5		0	
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		0	Surface swipes were not reported by the Swiss 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 workplaces have' 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		1	'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		2	'Some workplaces have' 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)	19	
Level of adherence to European Working Time Directive (EWTD)	5		5	
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		5	
To what extent cancer treatment delayed due to cancer nursing	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.
Recognition (4 items presented below)	18	8 (0-15)	9	
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		0	'Not established' 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)	3	
Number of practicing nurses/1000 citizens (www.europe.eu/Eurostat and OECD)	3		3	

Strengths and recommendations for improvements

Overall, Switzerland (total score 66) received relatively high scores the ECNI 2020. Congratulations! Other countries with similar total scores were France (total score 63), Cyprus and Iceland (both with total score 64). Switzerland received maximum score in Workforce statistics.

Patient and occupational safety could improve, if formal training for nurses before handling cytotoxic drugs, systematic swipe testing for occupational exposure and speaking up/ whistle blower policies were systematically implemented at all workplaces, and also if (Personal Protection Equipment) PPE were always available. It should be noted however, that Switzerland was one of the few countries in the ECNI 2020, where no nurse reported risks for negative consequences if asking for alternative duties (to reduce occupational exposure for cytotoxic drugs) during pregnancy/breast feeding.

Switzerland could improve their scores for the next revision of the ECNI 2022 if advanced cancer nursing roles and nurse-led cancer care were fully implemented and recognized on a national level and also if the Swiss Minister of

Health/Education would support EONS Cancer Nursing Education Framework. Finally, if all centers had a dedicated board nursing position and if, the scores would also be higher.

EONS Advocacy Working Group, December 2020