

Accepted Manuscript

Securing the continuity of medical competence in times of demographic change

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PII: S1521-6896(18)30010-7

DOI: [10.1016/j.bpa.2018.04.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpa.2018.04.005)

Reference: YBEAN 981

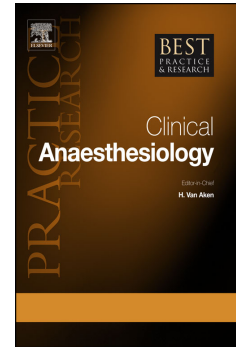
To appear in: *Best Practice & Research Clinical Anaesthesiology*

Received Date: 20 February 2018

Accepted Date: 3 April 2018

Please cite this article as: Hahnenkamp K, Hasebrook J, Buhre W, Van Aken H, Securing the continuity of medical competence in times of demographic change, *Best Practice & Research Clinical Anaesthesiology* (2018), doi: 10.1016/j.bpa.2018.04.005.

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Securing the continuity of medical competence in times of demographic change

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Shortage of skilled personnel

Many hospitals in industrialized countries are suffering from increasing shortages of personnel due to decreasing numbers of young doctors and shorter employment lengths on the one hand combined with pressure to increase performance and specialization on the other. These factors exist due to demographic changes: The increasing amount of treatable and chronic illnesses increase the morbidity burden, which leads to increasing treatment demands and an expansion of medical hospital services. However at the same time, the financial and personnel resources for a further expansion of medical services are becoming increasingly scarce, so that the pressure to offer medical care more efficiently and economically increases.

Paradoxically, despite the total number of doctors increasing in recent years, there will be a shortage of well-trained doctors in almost all OECD countries in the years to come. The Association of American Medical Colleges predicts, for example, that the United States of America will need 26% more physicians over the period 2006 to 2025. However, the calculated supply of physicians will increase by only 10 to 12%. The EU Commission estimates a shortage of one million health professionals by 2020, if action is not taken. A lack of health professionals will result in 15% of care services not being delivered due to lack of resources.

Up to now, management data and methods do not sufficiently support anaesthetists in their new role as medical managers: Static benchmark data collected at fixed reference dates do not sufficiently reflect the nexus between capacity and competence, and do

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