

To be a Doctor in Germany

A Medical Journalist's view
into Doctor's position and feelings
within our Healthcare System:

10 Theses

Medical Education

Thesis:

Medical education does not sufficiently follow professional needs

It's easy to become a doctor in Germany.

The scientific level of education is good. But there is a significant lack of practice at the patientside in small groups.

Crowded universities and mainly theoretical exams by multiple choice questions make it especially easy to get the degree.

Medical Education

Thesis:

Medical education does not sufficiently follow professional needs

If you want to become a good doctor, you have to care for your qualities by yourselves.

Especially important side-knowledge as ethics, legal and economical aspects and management is not subject of the regular course of studies.

Doctor's values and self understanding

Thesis:

Doctors love their profession but actually do not enjoy their job

It's not easy here to enjoy doctor's job:

- Regulation of any step of medical treatment is increasing,
- Fees for treatment items are rather low,
- Lump sums and budgets are common,
- Recourses are to pay to the funds, if more than an average amount for medicine is spent by prescription.

Doctor's values and self understanding

Thesis:

Doctors love their profession but actually do not enjoy their job

The Healthcare System is more and more directed by
Lawyers and Economists.

Civil and social claims are often not compossible;
different liabilities between civil right for patients and social
right for the statutory payers make every medical treatment a
ridge walk. Lawyers for Medical Cases are the fastest growing
group of specialists in Law.

Doctor's values and self understanding

Thesis:

Doctors love their profession but actually do not enjoy their job

The Healthcare System is more and more directed by
Lawyers and Economists.

Recommendations and Decisions by Economists are often far
from medical or the patient's needs.

The German Healthcare System

Thesis:

Our Healthcare System is too social to be really efficient

From a social point of view we have perhaps the world's best healthcare system:

Nearly everybody has an insurance that gives nearly free access to all possible healthcare services –
High Med for everyone!

The German Healthcare System

Thesis:

Our Healthcare System is too social to be really efficient

This legal base – formulated in a huge special book of laws (SGB V) – is realized under direction of the payers, mainly – to 90% - an association of a big bundle of about 140 statutory healthcare insurances (GKV).

Their permanent conflict, to fulfill the legal claim at one side and to get along with their money at the other side, produces enormous efforts in setting up and managing control mechanisms and in the consequence bureaucracy.

The German Healthcare System

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Our Healthcare System is too social to be really efficient

Also the fact of receiving nearly anything possible in medicine by an obligatory and rather high monthly fee produces a customer's "fully-comprehensive-mentality" demanding – of course – only the best. There is no economical stimulus to the customer to take on any responsibility to prevent diseases and healthcare costs.

This system cannot be efficient and always bears the risk to exceed its own limits.

The System's Limits

Thesis:

Feeling system limits does not always mean they are real

„What's your problem?

*Rising the fees for your social insurance means
strengthening your strong and successful healthcare industry.“*

(Henry Kissinger, on a visit in Germany)

Is it a real problem, rising the (statutory) healthcare share on the National Produkt from 7% to 8%? A limit?

Healthcare Policies

Thesis:

A short-term-small-steps-healthcare-policy
as practiced in our democracy
has counter-productive effects on the system's stability

Doctors opening an own practice today are requested to present a solid business plan showing the expected financial development over some years. For that a long-term reliable frame of conditions is necessary.

Healthcare Policies

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Even more considerable is the problem of a yearly changing frame of conditions for the pharmaceutical industry, as new products must be calculated about 10 years before market entry.

Healthcare Policies

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A short-term-small-steps-healthcare-policy
as practiced in our democracy
has counter-productive effects on the system's stability

One reason for the short-term-small-steps-policy is the rather short period (4 years) between government building elections.

Federal Healthcare Ministry



Daniel Bahr (34)



Ulrike Flach (60)



A. Widmann-Mauz (45)

Parliamentary Counselor



Legislator





Healthcare Communication

Thesis:

A young doctor's generation trained with social and electronic media replaces a former common "lone-wolf-feeling" of doctors in their own praxis by team building.



Female influences

Thesis:

Female lifestyle and female business needs are getting more and more influence on the medical professions.

60 Percent of medical students are female. Trend: rising.

The total number of doctors is rising, the total number of working hours is decreasing.

Payors count doctors, patients need hours.

Lifestyle

Thesis:

New Lifestyle demands cause undersupply in low developed regions.

It's not cool working 60 hours/week, 24/365, but it's reality in some outlying parts of the country.

Work-Life-Balance becomes more and more important.

Life-Partner demands a near-by job, too.

Infrastructure wanted for themselves and their children.

It's NOT a question of money! Nor of quality!

Evidence Based Medicine (EBM)

Thesis:

Evidence Based Medicine reflects only a small part of Medicine, important dimensions of medicine are not comprehensible by EBM logics

What about empathy, humanity, feeling and believing?

What about the power of voice and words?

What about individual medicine?

Doctors watch with scepticism the priority of EBM influencing methods, therapy and also their fees.

Change – yes, we can?

Thesis:

The change process is just going on

This is no theory but real life. The changes in doctors' self understanding, their communication and their lifestyle are eagerly watched by the politics.

The changes in our system, however, are not initiated by politics but by informed patients and the lifestyle of a new doctors' generation.

Perspectives

Message that I give to my students:

*“You made the right choice of profession,
it’s great to be a doctor.*

Our Profession has a good future.

*Please keep always working on your own professional quality
and fighting for our values.”*

Thanks for
Listening !

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