

CHILDREN HEALTH CARE IN LATVIA: 10 YEARS EXPERIENCE

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Background. Paediatricians are key persons in children health care but their position at different care levels varies from country to country, influenced by income, traditions, health care organization. It is provided in Latvia to cover primary health care in children by changing system very rapidly from paediatricians to general practitioners.

The aim of study. To understand better the situation in our own country and to prepare better for future threats and challenges authors-members of Board, Association of Paediatrics, Latvia - followed children health care indices over 10 past years comparing to European countries and described changes in children health care at different levels.

Methods. Statistical, descriptive methods were used. Set of questions was prepared and independently selected professionals and patients were interviewed about attitude to children health care.

Results. Infant mortality rate (9,7‰) decreases slowly and still higher comparing to average numbers in European Union. Perinatal mortality rate is 12,3 per 1000.

Quantity of pediatric units at hospitals in the countries has been reduced while tertiary health care became stronger during overview period.

Interviews showed responders in urban area preferring to have pediatric primary care. Direct access to pediatrician still under discussion.

Conclusions. Analysed data showed pediatricians role has to be developed and strengthened. To achieve this goal experience exchange between European countries is necessary.

