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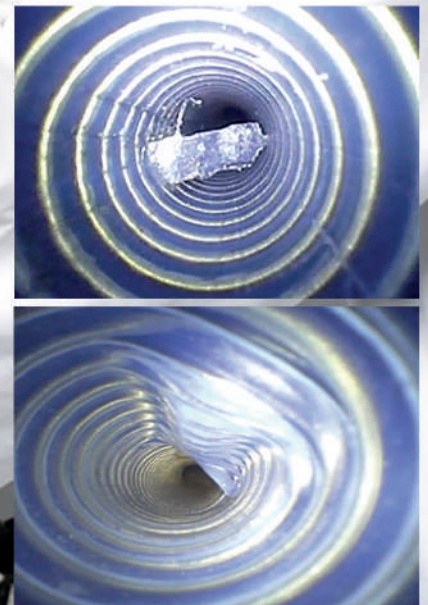


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The Art of Leadership



Great leadership is essential to growing your business. Yes, because the business world is a highly competitive one and, regardless of the type of industry, entrepreneurs must make every effort to stay ahead of the competition. One of the areas that can really make the difference in your business is leadership. Having great, effective leadership is critical for the success of any organization. Great leaders don't just inspire their teams to work harder and achieve more, they also create a positive work culture that fosters growth and development. Moreover, great leadership could potentially double your business's profits. People have a natural disposition to follow a leader. Regardless of your level of knowledge and experience in a particular field, you can achieve more if there is a higher authority you report to. This is because a leader provides guidance and helps you minimize potential threats that can affect your productivity. A leader doesn't need to be a senior colleague, but they can still improve your chances of success through effective mentorship, accountability, and delegation of duties.

From being able to direct employees to the right tasks, to keeping projects organized, adept leadership can go a long way yet, many organizations struggle to implement the right training. According to Zippia, a U.S. career and jobs website, 83% of businesses believe it's important to develop leaders at every level of the company, but only 5% successfully do. Furthermore, 78% of business leaders actively and regularly focus on engaging with their employees, but only 33% of employees report feeling engaged; 69% of employees say they would work harder if they felt their efforts were better recognized and only 48% of them view their company's leadership as "high quality." While everyone recognizes the value

of having strong leadership at every level of an organization, businesses struggle to find and develop leaders. Only 10% of people are natural leaders, and another 20% show some qualities of basic managerial talent that can be cultivated into high-quality leadership.

Leaders who possess and foster essential skills such as strong communication, collaboration, and motivation have, thus, the power to transform individuals and teams, driving them toward excellence and achievement. But what is organizational leadership? Leadership is the ability to implement change by creating and communicating a vision to others. Strong leaders can create a vision for the company but, more importantly, they're able to help the team "catch" that vision, to communicate it effectively to their team, and then guide and support the team to make that vision a reality. Effective leaders must consider what's happening outside and inside their businesses. They must use the art of inspiring and motivating a group of people to achieve a common goal, lead their organizations into the future, anticipate and respond to internal and external threats, pursue opportunities that range from money makers to risky bets, handle crises quickly and assuredly.

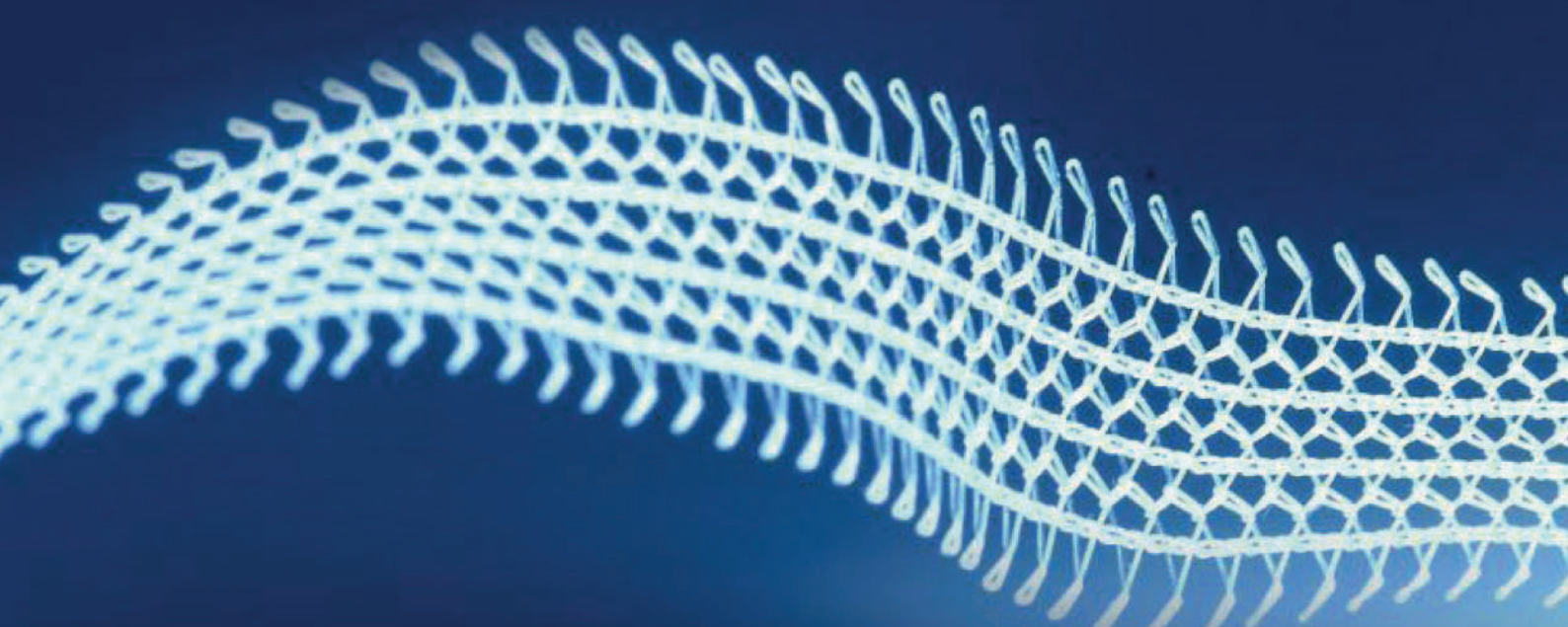
Developing high-class leadership is essential for the success of your business. It is a vital management function that helps to direct an organization's resources for improved efficiency and the achievement of goals, it encourages innovation and creativity, and increases the productivity of your team. For this, *Infomedix International* is dedicating, in each issue, a special column on business improvement (page 31). We believe it is essential to learn how to communicate effectively and execute tasks. To be a successful leader, it is crucial to continuously develop your skills, to seek opportunities to grow and adapt. Whether you're already an organizational leader or hoping to become one, you can benefit from pursuing educational opportunities that enhance your leadership knowledge and abilities. By investing in the leadership of your business, you could see your vision become a reality!

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While Scope 3 targets aren't mandatory, SBTi encourages setting emission reduction goals. Currently, 527 US companies have been recognized by SBTi and have committed to its targets. (Note: The number of companies with approved targets may vary as of March 26, 2024.)

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Villa Sistemi Medicali

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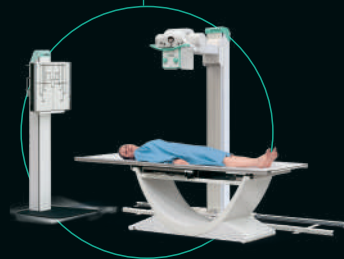
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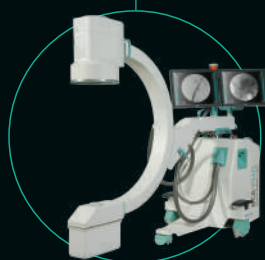
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By virtue of their vision and initial effort, BMI can now proudly boast a global recognition as well as a highly reputable brand that will be carried on by the new generation of managers and will continue to thrive for many years to come.

We take the opportunity of our anniversary to express our gratitude to Mr. Michele Brembilla and Mr. Oreste Greco for what they have done until today, their legacy and their continuous support.



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The Italian Medical Device Industry in Figures, 2023

Italy is not only a cultural superpower and home to world-renowned fashion brands and exquisite food products, but also a world leader in many important sectors, among them pharmaceuticals, medical and biomedical products. Along the centuries Italy has been able to combine tradition and innovation, through manufacturing processes focused on quality, human relations, respect for the environment, of a given lifestyle and consumption. Thanks to such a unique combination, Italy is not only competitive on global markets but also the 8th biggest world economy and the 4th biggest economy in Europe. It holds the second largest manufacturing base in Europe, after Germany, with a strong integration in the EU value chain. Thanks to its experience and the unique features of its productive fabric, Italy can be a strong and reliable partner on the path towards a long and sustainable future.

According to Confindustria Dispositivi Medici – Italian Medical Devices Association – **the Italian medical device sector, with its 4,449 companies and 118,837 employees, generates a market worth € 17.3 billion, between exports and domestic market.** It is a very heterogeneous, highly innovative, and specialized sector, where small companies coexist with large groups. The sector is characterized by a strong prevalence of SMEs (almost 94% of the total) covering 13 main

sectors, leading to a high level of product differentiation, basic for the development of healthcare and the Italian economy. The sector is also characterized by highly qualified employment. The number of women employed, researchers and with a research doctorate is higher than the general average for the country. There is strong concentration of employed people in Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, and Veneto. The northern part of the country is the most representative of the sec-

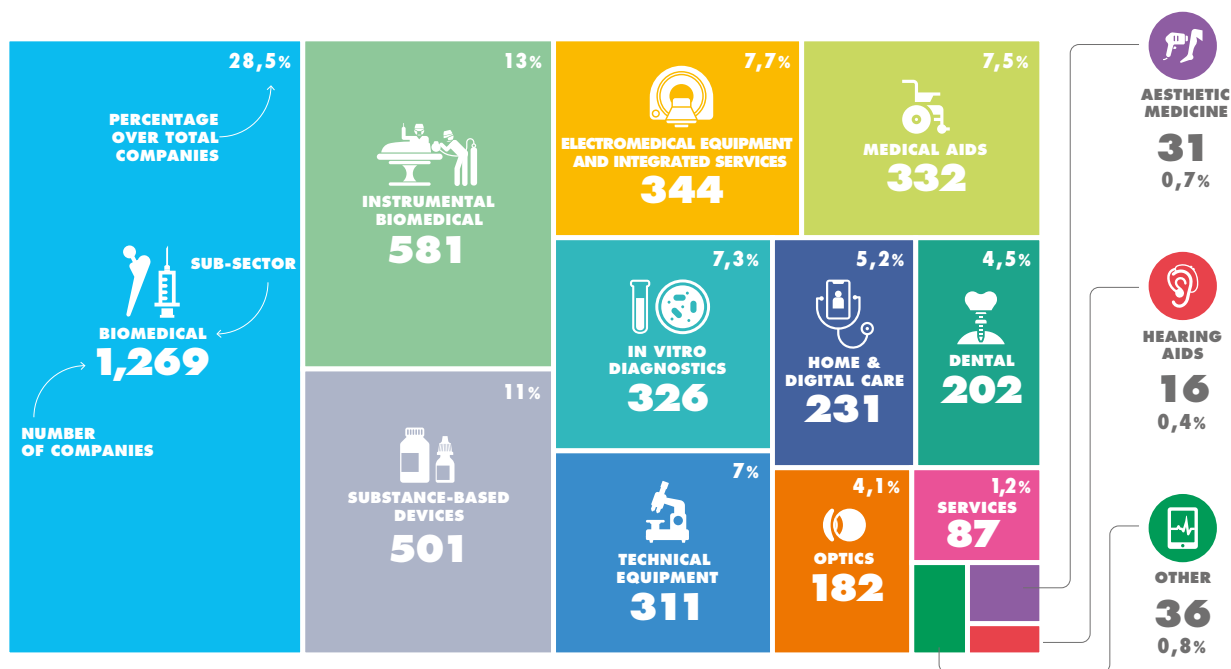
tor, with the greatest concentration of companies and turnover, and where 81% of the large companies are based. The central part of Italy is characterized by a good presence of companies, almost entirely concentrated in two regions: Lazio and Tuscany, and where large and small companies coexist. The south and the islands area is characterized by a lower presence of large companies but, on the contrary, there seems to be a solid reality of innovative start-ups.

Manufacturing companies	2,527
Distribution companies	1,555
Service companies	367
Total	4,449

Italy	No. of Companies
Northern area	2,847 (81% of large companies are based here)
Central area	887 (almost entirely concentrated in two regions: Lazio and Tuscany)
South and islands	715 (solid reality of innovative start-ups)



THE MEDICAL DEVICE SECTOR AND ITS 13 SUB-SECTORS



Source: Confindustria Medical Devices Study Center processing on CDM data, 2021 data



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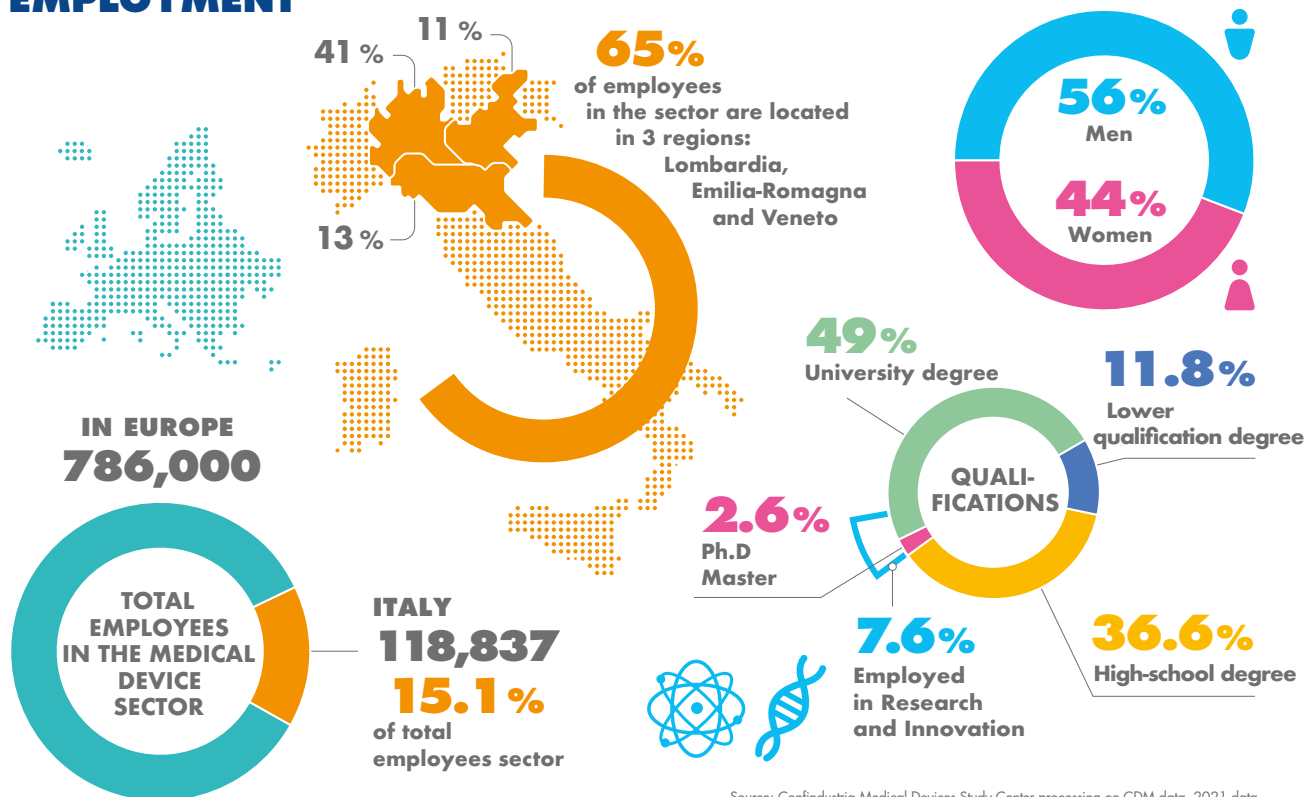
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EMPLOYMENT



Total healthcare spending	€ 167.7 billion
Public spending on total healthcare spending (%)	71.6 %
Public spending on medical devices and services	€ 9 billion
Public health spending on total medical devices spending (%)	7.0 %
Per capita public spending on medical devices in Italy	€ 123 (average)
Per capita public spending on medical devices in Europe	€ 284 (average)

Source: Confindustria Dispositivi Medici



Electromedical Equipment per 1,000,000 inhabitants

ITALY	NORTH	CENTER	SOUTH
0.17	0.14	0.22	0.16

Source: Health Ministry - Healthcare equipment flow (DGSISS) 2019

	Italy (€)	Spain (€)	Portugal (€)	Germany (€)	France (€)	U.K. (€)
Public health spending per capita	1,902	1,626	1,155	3,579	3,058	2,858
Private health spending per capita	663	684	722	1,048	911	816

Source: OECD Health Data, 2019

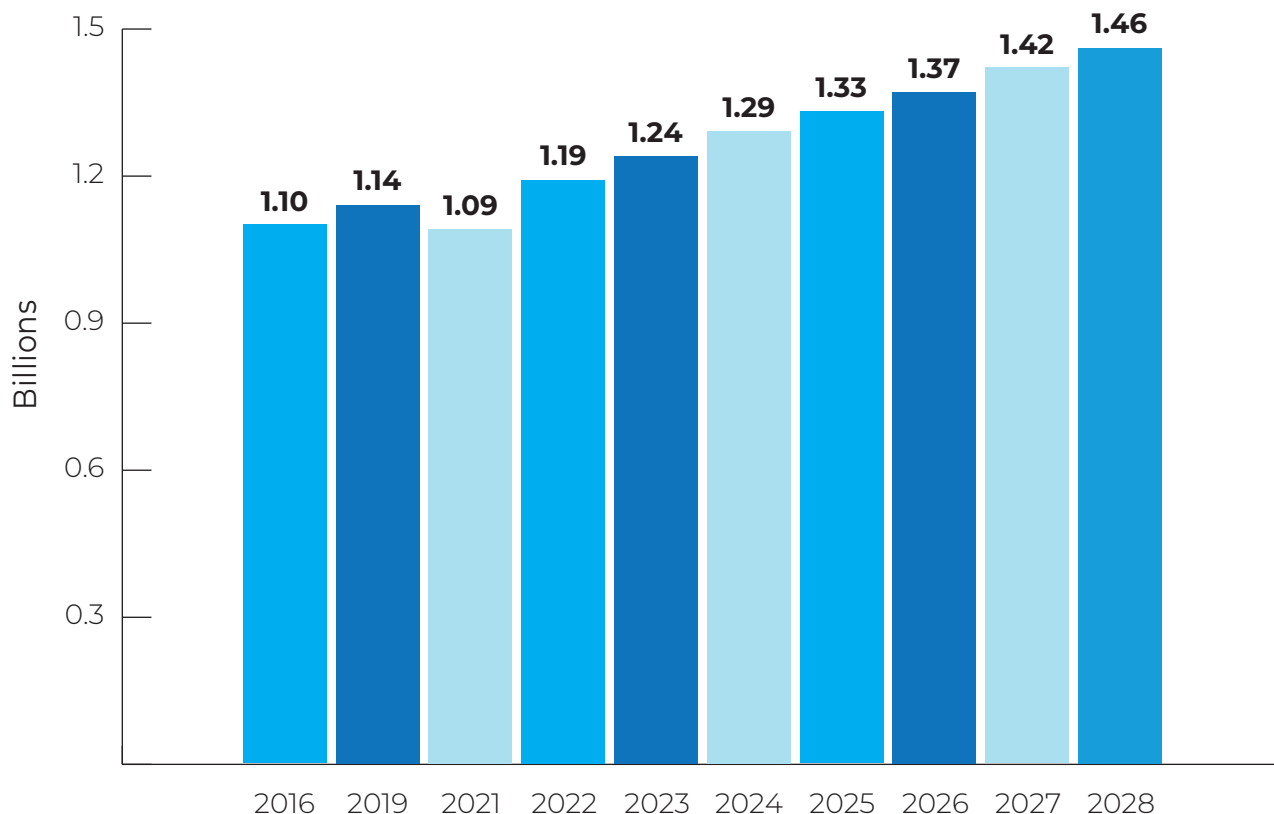
World Preview
SIRM Congress, Milan 20.06.2024

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Diagnostic Imaging Devices, Revenues (billions)



Notes: Data shown is using current exchange rates and reflects market impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war. Most recent update: Jan 2024

Source: Statista Market Insights

International trade sees the USA regaining a leading role, after the pandemic phase in which imports from China intensified. In the last year, exports to the USA increased by 24.4%, while imports from China decreased by 5.4%. Main export countries are the USA, Germany, and France, while the main import countries are the Netherlands, Germany, and Belgium.

Per capita public spending on medical devices is on average € 123, with vast heterogeneity between regions, meaning that the region with the highest per capita spending, spends more than dou-

bled compared to the region with the lowest per capita spending. The country is still very far from European standards, with € 161 per capita average difference, and the international gap continues to widen.

Despite the restrictive measures issued during the pandemic, limiting the implementation of clinical studies, in 2021 the sector invested a significant amount of € 1.4 billion in R&D. There is a total of 297 start-ups and 177 highly innovative and qualified SMEs active in the sector. Italy's diagnostic imaging devices market is experiencing signifi-

cant growth and is poised to witness a substantial growth in revenue, with projections indicating €1.46bn by 2028. A survey from the Italian Court of Auditors (Ministry of Health, Superior Council of Health, LII Session (2019-2022) "Modernization of the technological park: Reflections and proposals" (PNRR -M6C2: Investment 1.1)) has highlighted a high number of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and CT scan equipment, 60% higher than the European average per inhabitant, with a more marked imbalance in the central regions of Italy.



As customer preferences are shifting towards devices that offer better image quality, faster scanning times, and improved patient comfort, market players are thus investing in the development of advanced imaging techniques, such as 3D and 4D imaging, to improve the diagnostic capabilities of imaging devices. Furthermore, there is a growing trend of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning algorithms into imaging devices, enhancing accuracy

and efficiency of image interpretation. An aging population and a high prevalence of chronic diseases, contribute to the increase in healthcare expenditure together with favorable government policies that are further driving demand. **The Italian government has implemented initiatives to improve healthcare infrastructure and promote the adoption of advanced medical technologies, among them, the reduction of the obsolescence index of diag-**

nostic imaging devices installed in hospitals and health center (public and private).

On this regard, the Italian Pnrr¹ (Recovery and Resilience Plan) is allocating € 1.19 billion to replace 3,133 large healthcare devices that are more than five years old, such as CT scans, magnetic resonance imaging, linear accelerators, fixed radiological systems, angiographs, gamma cameras, gamma cameras/CT scans, mammographs, ultrasound scanners.

Note: (1) to address the challenges related to the pandemic crisis and the consequent slowdown of European economies, the European Union has prepared, within the framework of the Next Generation EU, the Recovery and resilience facility (RRF), a new financial instrument to support recovery in Member States.

Among main sources:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. (2020) -<https://www.ice.it/en/invest/did-you-know-it>

- Confindustria Dispositivi medici (Assobiomedica) -www.confindustriadm.it/il-settore-in-numeri-2023/

Ministero della Salute, Consiglio Superiore di Sanità, Sessione LII (2019-2022) "Ammodernamento del parco tecnologico: Riflessioni e proposte" - (PNRR -M6C2: Investimento 1.1)

- Statista Market Insights <https://es.statista.com/outlook/hmo/medical-technology/medical-devices/diagnostic-imaging-devices/italy> Most recent update: Jan 2024

- ANSA - https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/cronaca/2024/01/09/sanita-sole-24-ore-slitte-di-2-anni-larrivo-delle-nuove-tac_7405bbca-1ce7-4ad1-abba-4b0b0421566b.html

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Development of Radiology Over the Years

Special Italian Radiology

Following the discovery in 1895 of x-rays by Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen, interest in x-rays and their practical applications was immediately very much alive in Italy.

Among the first to be drawn into this new frontier 'of the invisible' was Giuseppe Vicentini, director of the Institute of Physics at the University of Padua. Then it would be Röntgen himself who would verify in person, when visiting Italy, how much the echo of his name had been amplified in our country.

It was during a stay in Italy by Röntgen that he realised that Italy was the scene of the first important application of his discovery in surgery.

It took place in Naples, at the Ospedale Militare della Trinità. The author was medical lieutenant colonel Giuseppe Alvaro, who used X-rays to locate and then extract bullets that had wounded two soldiers. We are talking about 1896, just one year after the discovery of x-rays.

*Given the rapid development of radiology in our country, Infomedix International decided to dedicate a special focus to Italian x-ray equipment manufacturers, interviewing some of the historical companies that have contributed to the development of radiology in Italy such as **IAE Industria Applicazioni Elettroniche**, **Technix** and **Villa Sistemi Medicali**.*

Continuing a tradition of high-quality design and production, these companies will be showcasing their novelties keeping the level of radiology in Italy high.

The first question we asked them was how each company came into being.

As regards IAE, its history began in 1950 with high power electronic valve production. Manufacturing of X-ray tubes followed in 1965, exploiting the already advanced technology in high vacuum and special metals. In 1973 a major change in stakeholders composition took place and the new property produced a strong interest for medical x-ray tube applications. Indeed, Mr Giuseppe Amigoni joined the company reorganizing and focusing on x-ray tubes for medical diagnostic imaging. Subsequently, the production of valves was soon abandoned.

According to *Villa Sistemi Medicali* feedback, the history of the company dates back to 1958, thanks to a man who had the ambition to improve the world of radiology: Alfio Villa. He founded a number of small radiological products and components companies, such as Eurostrazza, Fiad, Fao, and Joint,

just outside Milan, and began working on his vision. Alfio's goal was to create better devices for diagnosing medical and dental problems.

As time went on, the Villa Group companies developed skills and products that became complementary to each other, which driven Alfio Villa, in 1990, to merge them all into one company, which he called Villa Sistemi Medicali, thus creating one of the leading players in the diagnostic equipment market in Italy. In the early 2000s, Villa became part of DEL Global Technologies, a United States-based company active in medical imaging equipment and power conversion subsystems. This opened up new opportunities to grow and innovate. But in 2011, something exciting happened – they decided to go their own way again. Their own managers and group of investors helped become independent once more. Even with all these changes, one thing stayed the same: their commitment to making better medical machines. That's why in 2019, they decided to

focus solely on making machines for medical imaging. They sold the dental equipment branch to Acteon Group so they could put all our energy into improving medical imaging technology.

For *Technix* company, their story begins with the acquisition of Technix Italia S.r.l. in 1990. At the time it was a small family-run company, with two workers and six designers, and based in Pedrengo, in the province of Bergamo. Technix's first successful product was a 3.3 kW x-ray handset with which they managed to close a customisation deal with the Philips OEM. Since then, they have grown and become an ever-growing company.

What is your impact in the radiology industry?

"*Villa Sistemi Medicali* has left an indelible mark on the radiology industry through its steady commitment to excellence and innovation. With over 6,000 installations in radiology centres worldwide,



including 1,560 in Europe alone, we have established ourselves as a significant contributor to the global radiology landscape. Our comprehensive product portfolio covers a wide range of medical radiology equipment, including radio-fluoroscopy systems, general radiography systems, mobile and surgery room X-ray units, mammography units, and digital imaging solutions.

With over 60 years of experience in the field, Villa Sistemi Medicali has garnered extensive expertise in X-ray systems. We have continually evolved alongside digital technologies and new production processes, investing in cutting-edge tools for training and remote support, such as augmented reality and virtual reality.

What sets us apart is not just the solutions of our products but also our commitment to customer satisfaction. We prioritize technical service, boasting a wide network of highly qualified and specialized technicians who provide effective and reliable maintenance service. Furthermore, our strategic partnerships with highly qualified and professional companies in more than 100 countries enable us to consolidate our presence and growth worldwide, making us a major player in the global diagnostic radiology industry.

In summary, Villa Sistemi Medicali's impact in the radiology industry is characterized by our dedication to quality, innovation, and customer

service, ensuring that healthcare providers worldwide have access to cutting-edge radiological imaging solutions that improve patient care and outcomes."

Technix, on the other hand, states: "As far as X-ray portables are concerned, we are now a leader in Europe based on the number of machines produced. This achievement has been possible thanks to the continuous research and innovation pursued by our R&D department. IMD S.p.A. can in fact boast some fifteen R&D staff and five external consultants out of a total of approximately 140 employees."

According to *IAE*: "Thanks to the continuous search for new products and their quality improvement, and the continuous support of our customers, we have found our place among the large x-ray tube manufacturers."

IAE faces every challenge through technological innovation, know-how and professional training of its engineers and operators. Currently, *IAE* is following several research paths; on one side, activities focused on the improvement of product performances and their application influence. On the other side, *IAE* is continuously studying its processes, trying to reach the highest levels for reliability and optimization.

When asked how you differ from other brands, Villa Sistemi Medicali

replied that it distinguishes itself from other brands through a combination of factors that underscore their commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction. Firstly, their comprehensive product portfolio, which includes a wide range of radiographic applications, reflects the intention to provide customers with a comprehensive choice of products that meet all their diagnostic imaging needs, allowing them to have a unique provider to relate with over time.

Additionally, their extensive sales network and global presence underscore their commitment to accessibility and customer support. With a presence in over 90 countries worldwide, facilitated by a network of over 150 dealers, Villa Sistemi Medicali ensures that their products are readily available and supported wherever our customers are located.

IAE has grown to be the largest independent manufacturer of rotating anode x-ray tubes in Europe. Offering the diagnostic imaging industry more than 150 different products, they have become the strategic partner for many of the largest imaging equipment manufacturers in the world.

But what really distinguishes *IAE* is the uniqueness of its production process. In particular, the manufacturing process of x-ray tubes must guarantee that every single component is performing at the highest level.



This is necessary to ensure that the tube remains stable when high-tension is applied, and to guarantee the correct dispersion of the great heat produced by its functioning, considering that 99% of the energy sent to the x-ray tube is converted to thermal energy and only 1% to x-rays.

Therefore, it's crucial to pay attention to the minimum details impacting on the end result, at each stage of the production process. This includes selecting the purest raw materials, that IAE buys only from certified and exclusive suppliers, some of them being the only existing producers for certain types of materials.

Technix, instead, reports that their strengths lie in innovation, research and the ability to best meet the needs of the end user. They have always worked to achieve higher performance and better image quality, while limiting the radiation dose delivered to safeguard patient health.

Returning to development in radiology, how did you become one of the most important radiology companies in Italy?

IAE: "It all begins in 2002 when IAE expanded production capacity by opening a second facility in Cormano, Milan, Italy. Since then, the company has grown to be a well-recognized brand in international markets by meeting the increasing demands of the diagnostic imaging Industry with innovative and competitive products and consistent quality."

Technix: "Over the years, turnover increased and *Technix S.p.A.* acquired other companies in the sector, such as *IMD S.p.A.* of Scanzo Rosciate (BG) and *SIAS* of Granarolo (BG). Subsequently, the company *AEM*, engaged in the production of monoblocks and generators, was also acquired, which in turn acquired *PSM*, a company with the same core business.

This union gave rise to *IMD Generators S.r.l.*, which today exports its products worldwide. With the acquisition of *IMD S.p.A.*, the marketing of X-ray handsets under the



brand name *Intermedical S.r.l.* was also started. Today these three companies, namely *Technix S.p.A.*, *IMD Generators S.r.l.* and *Intermedical S.r.l.*, all belong to *IMD International Medical Devices S.p.A.*, which was listed on the Italian stock exchange on 7 July 2023 and boasts a turnover of approximately 50 million."

Villa Sistemi Medicali: "Becoming one of the top radiology companies in Italy wasn't easy, but it all started with our passion and desire for making a difference in healthcare. *Villa Sistemi Medicali's* journey to prominence began with a strong focus on innovation and a deep understanding of our customers' needs.

From the very beginning, we made it our mission to develop advanced radiology systems that could help doctors diagnose and treat patients more effectively. By investing in research and development, we were able to stay ahead of the curve and offer truly ground-breaking solutions.

But it wasn't just about the technology – it was also about our commitment to excellence in everything we do. We built a reputation for delivering high quality products and providing attentive customer service. Our dedication to quality and reliability earned us the trust of healthcare professionals across Italy.

As we continued to grow, we expanded our reach both domestically and internationally. We formed

strategic partnerships and alliances, allowing us to tap into new markets and bring our innovative solutions to more people around the country.

Moreover, the introduction of Lean manufacturing in the factory process has become a significant advantage that *Villa Sistemi Medicali* assures for its own commercial partners and customers in order to keep the reliability, diagnostic quality and competitiveness of its medical products, with the aim to become one of the main reference points not only in Italy but also in the international radiology field."

Talking about future prospects,

IAE would like to develop a value agenda that maps strategic priorities across business units, product lines and capabilities. Moreover, they strive to increase market share and to best supply the major radiology equipment manufacturers.

Indeed, the manufacturers of x-ray equipment have the chance to benefit from the know-how, the high-quality and performing technology developed by IAE in its 70 years of activity in the medical industry, as well as receiving a tailor-made product, created exclusively to meet their own needs.

On the other hand, *Technix* states that following the post-listing cash raising, their goal is to acquire other companies in the radiology sector, thus expanding their product port-



folio and consequently their turnover.

At *Villa Sistemi Medicali*, instead, they are excited about the future and the opportunities it holds for the company. Their vision is shaped by their commitment to innovation, excellence, and customer satisfaction. Looking ahead, they see a future where medical imaging technology continues to advance at a rapid pace. They are dedicated to staying at the forefront of these advancements, continuously improving products and services to meet the evolving needs of healthcare professionals and patients.

One of their key focuses for the future is the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning into our radiology systems. By harnessing the power of AI, they aim to enhance diagnostic accuracy, streamline workflows, and improve patient outcomes.

Moreover, they are committed to expanding their global footprint and reaching new markets. *Villa Sistemi Medicali* will continue to forge strategic partnerships and collaborations, both domestically and internationally, to ensure that their innovative solutions are accessible to healthcare providers around the world.

In summary, *Villa Sistemi Medicali* future perspectives revolve around innovation, expansion, and sustainability. They are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead

and remain steadfast in their commitment to advancing healthcare through cutting-edge technology and unwavering dedication to our customers.

Will you be attending radiology trade shows soon? If so, will you be exhibiting any new developments for the industry?

Technix: "Every year we are always present as exhibitors at the ECR in Vienna and for the past few years we have also participated in Arab Health. Our intention is definitely to continue taking part in these events, which are a valuable opportunity to make new contacts and consolidate existing ones. In addition, trade fairs are an excellent stage for promoting our new equipment. At ECR 2024, *Technix S.p.A.* presented the TCA 7 Compact, a new mobile C-arm for fluoroscopy, equipped with an integrated on-board display station. Another company of the group, *Intermedical S.r.l.*, will be present at SIRM 2024 in Milan with *Lucerna Uarm 3D*, an innovative U arm with 3D image acquisition software."

Villa Sistemi Medicali believes in and invests heavily in active participation in major radiology trade shows, viewing them as primary events to showcase the latest innovations and connect with industry experts and professionals: "Every year, you'll find our booths at fairs

and congresses like the European Congress of Radiology (ECR), Medica, Arab Health, and the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA). These gatherings provide us with unparalleled opportunities to engage with our peers, exchange insights, and unveil our newest developments to a global audience.

Looking ahead, we're excited about our upcoming participation in the Italian Society of Medical Radiology (SIRM) Congress, scheduled for June 20-23, 2024, in Milan. This event has special significance for us, as it has always proven to be an ideal platform to present product advances to the Italian radiology community.

In fact, it will be at this congress that we will preview the new generation of our digital radio-fluoroscopy system. After many years of success, the Apollo family will be joined by a new remote-control system with different and innovative features."

IAE believes that attending international events is very important to increase their visibility, since *IAE* is a strategic partner for the most important equipment manufacturers worldwide: "That's why we take part in the most important international trade shows such as ARAB HEALTH Dubai, ECR Vienna, KIMES Seoul, CMEF China, SIRM Milan, Medica Düsseldorf."





Hereafter, there are specific questions for each company interviewed focusing on individual peculiarities and characteristics



The history of IAE began in 1950 with high power electronic valve production. With its 75-year history, this company has much to talk about the transformation and development of the radiology industry in Italy.

Any hints?

Founded in 1950, IAE began manufacturing high-power vacuum tubes. In 1965, utilizing their experience in vacuum tubes and specialized technologies in metal alloys, IAE began manufacturing x-ray tubes.

"In 1973 Mr Giuseppe Amigoni joined the company reorganizing and focusing on x-ray tubes for medical diagnostic imaging.

In 2002 IAE expanded production capacity by opening a second facility in Cormano, Milan, Italy. Since then, the company has grown to be a well-recognized brand in international markets by meeting the increasing demands of the Diagnostic Imaging Industry with in-



Elio Bettoni, Chief Executive Officer at IAE and Giuseppe Amigoni, Former Business Owner

novative and competitive products and consistent quality. Nowadays IAE is the biggest standalone x-ray tube manufacturer in Europe for rotating anode tubes.

Thanks to its wide range of products and with the addition of more than 30 different competitors' unit reloading (all CE marked), IAE is sure to meet market needs at the highest level."

Looking to the future, what are IAE's plans?

"IAE tackles every challenge with technical innovation, applying their

engineers' and operators' extensive knowledge and experience.

The motivation to continuous improvement led IAE to look for cooperation within the universities. Thanks to a fruitful teamwork, a special equipment for the treatment of bearing balls surface was developed. With the impulse to continuous upgrades, IAE keeps constant contacts and cooperation with research institutes and test laboratories.

Our future perspective is to develop a value agenda that maps strategic priorities across business units, product lines and capabilities."



Aniello Aliberti
Chairman of I.M.D. International Medical Devices S.p.A., a holding company that controls the companies Technix S.p.A., Intermedical S.r.l. and IMD Generators S.r.l.

Until 2021 you have been President of the Small Industry of Confindustria Bergamo (ndt. Piccola Industria di Confindustria Bergamo). Can you tell us what is the role of Italian radiology companies in the economic development of our country?

"Until 2021 I was actually President of the Small Industry of Confindustria Bergamo, but later I also took on the position of President of the Electromedicals & Integral Services Association of Confindustria Medical Devices, and since 14 December 2023 I have been National Vice-President of Confindustria Medical Devices with the delegation of Industrial Development. Active participation in these Associations has enriched me personally, allowing me to deal with many

different business realities, mostly belonging to the electro-medical sector. I was therefore able to see how the radiology sector, although a niche market, is very important in our country, with a particular concentration of companies especially in Lombardy."

Lombardy has more than 70% of radiology enterprises at the European level. What is the reason for this success?

"The reason for this certainly lies in the founding of Gilardoni S.p.A., which is based in the province of Lecco and was the first radiological company in Italy. From there, a cascade of many other companies was born, which today have made it possible to achieve this important result on a European scale."



Renato De Benedictis
Villa Sistemi Medicali Marketing Manager

Villa Sistemi Medicali was founded in 1958 and it started as a company committed to the development of diagnostic radiology systems. How important has this company been in the development of radiology through its products?

"Since its inception in 1958, Villa Sistemi Medicali has played an essential role in advancing the field of radiology through its innovative and reliable products. Our commitment to the development of diagnostic radiology systems has been integral to shaping the landscape of medical and dental imaging technology. Over the years, our company has introduced a range of pioneering products that have significantly contributed to the improvement of radiology. From our early days, we have

been at the forefront of innovation, continuously trying to improve the accuracy, efficiency, and safety of diagnostic imaging procedures, both in the medical and dental fields.

Our products have not only enabled healthcare professionals to make more accurate diagnoses but have also progressed patient care by reducing radiation exposure and enhancing imaging quality. Whether it's our advanced general radiography systems, R/F systems, or digital imaging solutions, each product has been precisely designed to address the evolving needs of radiologists and improve patient outcomes.

In essence, Villa Sistemi Medicali has been one of the driving forces in the development of radiology through its unwavering dedication to advancing medical imaging technology."

Nowadays, what is the company's main target?

"Our company's main target today is deeply rooted in our belief that everyone deserves access to the best possible healthcare. We remain dedicated to leveraging diagnostic imaging technology to improve health outcomes and contribute to overall well-being.

Specifically, our focus lies in designing, manufacturing, supplying, and distributing medical radiology products and services that bring tangible value to our customers. This requires a commitment to continuous improvement and innova-



tion, ensuring that our solutions meet the evolving needs of radiology professionals and healthcare providers. Additionally, we aim to broaden our industry knowledge, strengthen customer support, and enhance the design of our equipment. By merging diverse skills and expertise, we strive to deliver innovative solutions with an excellent price-performance ratio, ultimately providing our customers with the tools they need to deliver exceptional patient care.

Furthermore, we are dedicated to identifying and capitalizing on market segments, geographies, strategic OEM partnerships, and sales channels that offer real competitive advantages. Through strategic growth initiatives and a customer-centric approach, we aim to solidify our position as a trusted leader in the field of medical radiology.

In summary, our main target is to uphold our commitment to innovation, quality, and customer satisfaction while leveraging our expertise to make a positive impact on healthcare outcomes worldwide."



Market Outlook

Market of 35 million people

By far the most populous country in Central Asia, with strong rate of population growth. Much is under 35 years old, leading to higher propensity to consume. The middle class constitutes an important segment of the population with good entrepreneurial vitality.

Uzbek Market Potential

A good industrial structure (automotive, hydrocarbons, electronics, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, food) placing strong emphasis on modernization and acquisition of high technology. However, competition is very tough, especially with China.

At the heart of Central Asia

It plays a key role in both the economic development and the security of the region and is thus an important partner country for Europe and other world countries in terms of development cooperation.

Gateway to a market of over 300 million people

Toward CIS countries, with reduced transport costs, due to its geographical centrality, as regards exports from Europe.

Key reforms

Aware of the country's imperfect record, the government has made the fight against corruption and respect for the rule of law one of the reform's cornerstones. According to transparency International, in 2019, the country ranked 158th out of 180 countries.



Uzbekistan's Ambitious Reforms

market outlook



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After a long period of standstill, Uzbekistan's President, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, elected in 2016, has embarked on an ambitious course of reform aimed at turning the country into a democratic market economy and is putting a focus on regional and international cooperation. Looking to the future, such an evolving country, recording discrete rates of economic growth, could play an important role for international trade.

Uzbekistan is a landlocked country with a long history of protectionism and state interventionism in all economic sectors that have, for decades, slowed down economic growth and isolated the country's productive system from international demand. **Although its economic-commercial system remains conditioned by pervasive control by the authorities on every type of activity, mainly aimed at strengthening national production, President Mirziyoyev's ambitious reformist agenda includes a substantial opening towards foreign countries.** The aims of his "Development strategy for a new Uzbekistan 2022-2026" include increasing the effectiveness of the

President Mirziyoyev has approved several measures to reform the economic sector, that have improved the investment climate, removed key market distortions, and unlocked the potential of private entrepreneurship (reducing the weight of the State, most specifically in economic-productive activities and in terms of the regulatory and control framework). Among the reforms, are grants to foreign investments (taxes frozen for 5 years from the registration of the Company), in particular in the three existing Free Economic Zones (Navoi, Angren and Jizzah, to which four others have been added), where they will enjoy customs exemptions (for the import of goods not produced in Uz-

” After Uzbekistan became independent in 1991, it was under the authoritarian rule of Islom Karimov for 25 years. After Karimov’s death in 2016, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, for many years the country's Prime Minister, was elected as the new president and reelected in 2021.

Population	35.7 million
Government	Presidential Republic (with most important political powers in the hands of the president)
Language	Uzbek official language; Russian remains a vehicular language
Religion	Islam (96.5%)

	2020	2023 est.	2024 est.
GDP per capita at current prices (US\$)	1,796	2,486	2,600
Unemployment rate (%)	7.5	6.4	6.1
Export of goods & services (% of GDP)		30.4	
Import of goods & services (% of GDP)		43.5	

administration, strengthening the rule of law, and developing a free civil society, developing the private sector, stimulating domestic and, above all, foreign investments, and improving the social protection system. Since his elections in 2016, aware of the need to improve the general climate to stimulate investments,

bekistan) and tax (for 3, 5, 7 or 10 years depending on the amount). The first positive effects of these reforms are already visible. Among other things, a ban has been imposed on using children and forced laborers in cotton harvesting. Measures like these have paved the way for Uzbekistan to be included as one of ten countries

worldwide in the European Union's GSP+ system of trade preferences. And there have been other remarkable achievements. For instance, the expenditure on drinking water supply has quintupled, giving 73% of the population access to clean drinking water, the number of kindergartens has tripled, giving 60% of children access

The Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan is in western Uzbekistan. In July 2022, violent protests broke out, leaving several people dead and wounded. The protests had been sparked by the constitutional changes planned by the Uzbek government. According to these changes, the constitution should no longer explicitly mention the sovereignty of Karakalpakstan, which is currently enshrined in the constitution, including the right to secede from the Republic of Uzbekistan. In response to the unrest, President Mirziyoyev sealed off the region and declared a state of emergency. After the plans to amend the constitution were dropped, things calmed down again.

Karakalpakstan covers nearly 40% of Uzbekistan's territory; the autonomous republic has about two million inhabitants.

to pre-school education, and thanks to scholarships the share of young people with a secondary education has increased from 9 to 25%.

In its foreign policy, Uzbekistan is committed to neutrality and non-alliance. Its heavy economic dependence on Russia makes it difficult for Uzbekistan to take a clear stance on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. **The country is working to expand Central-Asian cooperation and is scaling up its activities in regional and international organizations.** In July 2022, the European Union and Uzbekistan concluded negotiations on an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement which includes new areas of

cooperation and significantly improves the regulatory framework for trade and economic relations.

Not excessively affected by international recession of recent years, the country, according to official figures that need, however, to be considered cautiously, has recorded a constant growth rate of around 8% (only interrupted by the COVID-19 health crisis in 2020). **According to figures, Uzbekistan's economy has become more dynamic, witnessing a 7.4% GDP growth rate in 2021, driven by a surge in domestic and foreign investments and a recovery in domestic consumption.** Within a framework of stable political situation, there is much expectation for the reforms,

which remain crucial for the stability of the country socio-economic factors (in response to the tumultuous demographic growth, which is not absorbed by the labor market; improvement of living conditions of the population; reduction of regional gaps). Government projections show a possible acceleration of economic growth in the coming years, due to further expansion of domestic and foreign investments, greater access to credit, greater domestically driven demand due to wage increases, further price liberalization and greater exports. In 2020, Uzbekistan ranked 69th in the World Bank Doing Business Ranking, with a continuous improvement compared to the past.

President Mirziyoyev, re-elected in 2021 after a first term in 2016 (succeeding Islam Karimov who ruled the country since independence in 1991), has set up a broad reform program for a New Uzbekistan for the period 2022-2026, which includes seven priority areas:

1. GDP per capita expected to increase 1.6 times over the next five years, due to high growth rates.
2. Abolition of monopoly on electricity supply and introduction of market mechanisms, as part of the energy sector transformation process.
3. To attract 120 billion dollars of investments, of which 70 billion dollars of foreign investments, over the next 5 years.
- 4 Exports volume expected to increase to \$ 30 billion by 2026 and share of private sector in exports up to 60%.
5. Farmers' income expected to increase at least twice, ensuring at least 5% annual growth in agriculture.
6. Implementation of five-year programs in districts and cities, ensuring an equal development of provinces by increasing provincial economy by 1.4-1.6 times.
7. Volume of services expected to increase 3 times in the next 5 years, with the creation of 3.5 million new jobs in the sector. Informal service sector economy expected to decrease by 3 times (now exceeding 50% of GDP). The number of domestic tourists expected to increase to over 12 million, foreign tourists to 9 million and to double number of people employed in tourism to over 500 thousand.

Uzbekistan's Progress in Reforming its Healthcare System



Just as most former Soviet Union countries, Uzbekistan's health sector has suffered since the loss of the former Soviet Union government's subsidies and support. The quality of its healthcare declined and emigration deprived the health system of many practitioners. Since then, the country has rolled out several key health schemes to enhance productivity and simultaneously ensure proper accessibility. Furthermore, in recent years, it has embarked on an ambitious process to modernize and expand its health system and make progress towards universal health coverage. These developments have laid a robust foundation for future changes and have increased capacity to develop a more efficient and responsive national health system.

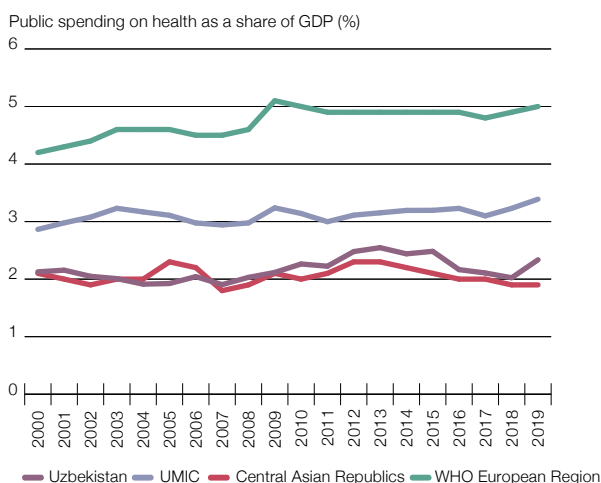
Over the past twenty years, Uzbekistan's health system changed drastically from the inherited Soviet health system. Healthcare provision in the country is primarily public, with a national healthcare plan which guarantees citizens the right to access free healthcare. **A basic benefits package is paid for and**

provided by the state and officially free of charge to all citizens but, for most of the population, many health services (including many primary, secondary, and tertiary services) fall outside the scope of this package. Since 2017 government spending on health has increased quite significantly,

but so did out-of-pocket expenditure, now accounting for over half of health spending.

The benefits package includes primary care, emergency care and specialized care for groups of the population classified by the government as vulnerable. It also includes care for certain "socially sig-

Public spending on health as a percentage of GDP is higher than in Central Asia overall

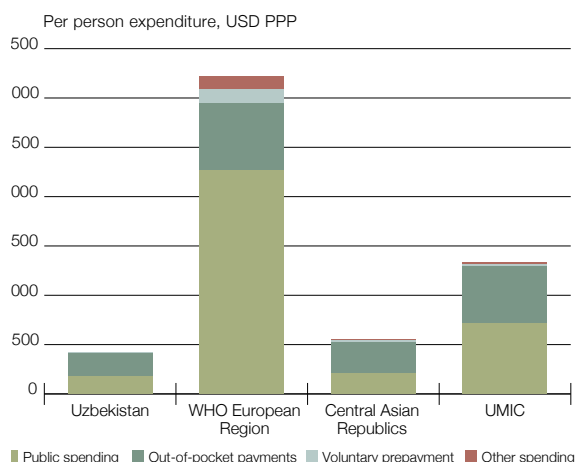


Notes: GDP: gross domestic product; UMIC: upper middle-income countries in the WHO European Region; averages are unweighted.

Source: European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, WHO Europe, Susannah Robinson. Reference Numbers ISBN: 978 92 890 5922 0

” One of the consequences of poor employment prospects is high labor migration, particularly to Russia. In 2021, migrants sent home remittances for a total of about 8 billion US Dollars, the equivalent of almost 12% of Uzbekistan’s GDP

Health expenditure per capita is slightly below the Central Asian average



Notes: 2019 data. PPP: purchasing power parity; UMIC: upper middle-income countries in the WHO European Region; averages are unweighted.

Source: European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, WHO Europe, Susannah Robinson. Reference Numbers ISBN: 978 92 890 5922 0

nificant and hazardous conditions”, including diseases such as polio-myelitis, tuberculosis (TB), leprosy, HIV/AIDS, and syphilis, and certain noncommunicable diseases such as cancer. **The de facto package largely excludes secondary and tertiary care, as well as outpatient pharmaceuticals, for significant parts of the population.** This can create incentives for patients to visit emergency care, which is provided free of charge, and generally considered to be better provided with equipment, medical aids and devices, and medications than other publicly run health facilities. Inpatient public facilities are permitted to charge fees for services provided outside the state-funded package. **As voluntary health insurance is not common, shortfalls for health needs not met by state-funded services are usually paid for fully out of pocket by individuals (especially the chronically ill), with consequences for financial protection and access to services, especially for poorer households and people with health condi-**

tions not covered by the state benefits package. For many people in Uzbekistan, eligibility criteria for the national benefits package are not directly linked to income levels. Although the government has introduced some measures to address this, financial protection for vulnerable households remains a challenge.

The Ministry of Health is the lead agency in organizing, planning, and managing the health system, and regulation is almost exclusively managed by the government. The system has three levels: national, regional, and district or city level. Having been an extremely centralized system under the former Soviet Union, Uzbekistan has gradually been introducing elements of decentralization to regional and district levels, especially on administrative issues.

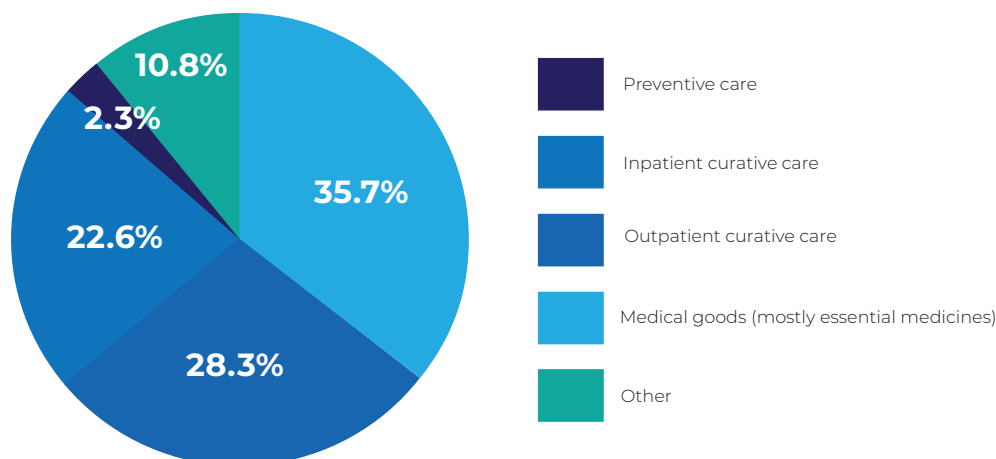
State health services are mainly funded through national taxation, and health workers in the public sector are salaried employees. Although increasing, public spending on health is comparatively low

to other countries. **The low per capita spending is a particular concern when considering the high cost of critical inputs such as medicines, devices and equipment, and the relative shortage of these essential items. In 2019, public expenditure accounted for just over 41% of current health expenditure.**

According to recent survey results, in 2020, 18% of households reported that at least one household member had not sought medical treatment due to cost. Overall, high shares of people noted that they were unable to afford basic needs and more than half of participants in a separate study reported that they did not have any savings. Informal payments for health services have also been reported, which can further limit access to care, especially for lower income groups. Since the early 2000s, the government has introduced several reforms to reduce informal payments, but it is unclear whether these policies are being successful.

	Uzbekistan	Central Asia (average)	WHO European Region (average)
Public spending as % of GDP, 2019	2.3%	1.9%	5%
Per capita spending on health (USD), 2019 (adjusted for PPP)	418	552	1,338 (upper-middle income countries)
OOP payments as % of health spending, 2019	57.7%	57.1%	28.7%

Note - GDP= Gross Domestic Product / OOP= Out-of-Pocket / PPP= purchasing power parity



Source: WHO, 2022a

Addressing health inequity

Uzbekistan has started a process of health system reform, that includes fundamental changes in service delivery and health financing arrangements, as well as digitalization of the healthcare sector. **From 2019-2025 the government is embarking on a far-reaching and ambitious reform agenda, initiated in 2018, following the "Concept on health development of the Republic of Uzbekistan 2019-2025", with an overall objective for Uzbekistan to improve the health of the whole population through universal health coverage (UHC).** Comprehensive health service delivery reforms are currently under way with plans to revise the package of services and medicines. This concept is being put into practice, since 2021, through a pilot project in *Syrdarya* oblast (region), with the intention to expand the new system to other regions and eventually implement planned reforms throughout the country. **A priority is to bring health services closer to the population and a comprehensive package of primary**

care services and medicines is being piloted in the region, including a presidential resolution establishing mandatory health insurance. The government's intention is to scale up these reforms to the entire country by 2025.

Key achievements to date in the *Syrdarya* region include:

- the establishment of a state health insurance fund as a single purchasing agency contracting health facilities and pharmacies;
- better organized primary healthcare services in *Syrdarya*;
- new provider payments and contracts with health facilities; and
- advanced electronic health (e-health) information systems used by pharmacies.

Patient-centric models of health services are still at an early stage of development and primary healthcare (PHC) reforms are central to addressing issues of health inequity in Uzbekistan. The country has a large and fragmented network of single-disease hospitals and specialist clinics that complicate efforts to use health resources effi-

ciently. **There is heavy dependence on hospitals for healthcare services, partly due to under-resourced PHC centers and low uptake of outpatient services.** The limited capacity to deliver services at community level, and to ensure access for vulnerable populations contributes to serious health and financial inequities.

There is an ongoing process of transfer from public to private, by attracting foreign investments, to increase the quality and coverage of services. The role of the private sector has expanded in recent years, with the number of private providers growing from about 3,500 in 2017 to over 6,000 in 2020. The range of services where the private sector is allowed to operate has expanded from 50 services in 2017 to 177 in 2020. However, limitations remain, and certain services are still legally required to be provided by the public sector, such as those for HIV/AIDS and TB. The Ministry of Health and local health authorities have some regulatory powers over the quality of care in the private sector.

Uzbekistan to Increase Share of Private Sector to 50%

A draft strategy “Public Health – 2030” was developed by the Ministry of Health and posted for public discussion. The project contains priority tasks and new directions to be implemented by 2030 to improve the quality of medical services through the introduction of modern and effective management. The proposed reforms encompass the restructuring of financing for all medical institutions, the optimization of pharmaceutical and medical equipment supply chains, and the implementation of advanced management principles.

One key aspect of the strategy involves the annual determination of the precise volume of guaranteed medical services for each level. The financing model for clinics will adopt an insurance approach, conducted on a patient basis for hospitals and for each assigned Uzbek citizen for clinics.

Furthermore, the strategy outlines plans to broaden the scope of paid medical services and progressively enhance the financial autonomy of medical institutions. A noteworthy goal is to elevate the contribution of the healthcare sector to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 5%. The strategy envisions the implementation of up to two hundred projects through public-private partnerships. Across all regions, multidisciplinary hospital groups, each with a minimum of a thousand beds, are slated for establishment.

Gulistan will host an innovative medicine center, incorporating a cell medicine center and a genomics center. Additionally, the Fergana region is earmarked for a \$160 million investment in a cluster featuring specialized centers for endocrinology, urology, cardiology, and radiotherapy. To support non-state medical institutions, the strategy introduces mechanisms such as purchasing services from the private sector and transferring the management of public clinics to private entities. The overarching aim is to increase the private sector's share in healthcare to 50%.

The strategy also outlines specific targets for advancing the material and technical infrastructure of medical institutions. These initiatives collectively underscore Uzbekistan's commitment to fostering a modern, efficient, and inclusive healthcare system by 2030.

Number of hospital beds	457 per 100 000 population
Share of private hospital beds	23.4%
Number of physicians	276 per 100 000 pop.
Number of nurses	1,100 per 100 000 pop.

Source: State Committee on Statistics, 2020

Number of hospital facilities	205
Specialized scientific and practical medical centers	18
Number of outpatient facilities	5,955
Rural family health centers	793
Higher medical and pharmaceutical educational institutions (including Medical Research Institutes -7)	18

Source: 2019, Ministry of Investment Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Health Status

Medical education in Uzbekistan is mainly provided by public institutions and partially financed by the state. A new private medical university, Akfa Medline, has begun operating in the capital, Tashkent, which is expected to expand in the future. Even if there are still challenges with physician emigration to neighboring countries, such as the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, mainly due to better earning opportunities, the number of physicians has increased in recent years, although still below the WHO European Region average. **As in many other countries, there are some disparities in the regional distribution of health professionals, with a concentration in urban areas and shortages in rural areas. Given that about half of Uzbekistan's population is**

living in rural areas, this disparity affects a sizeable share of the country's population.

Life expectancy had improved prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and was the second highest among Central Asian countries. There have been major reductions in infant and maternal mortality, reflecting government priorities in recent years, but rates remain high. Noncommunicable diseases are the main cause of mortality and morbidity in Uzbekistan, with female mortality rates from noncommunicable diseases the highest in the WHO European Region. The population is at risk from poor diet, high blood pressure, smoking and air pollution. Although the Universal Healthcare Service Coverage index, a global indicator monitoring progress towards coverage of essential health

services, suggests considerable improvement in Uzbekistan over the past two decades, user charges (both formal and informal) can limit access to necessary care, and services for conditions excluded from the basic benefits package may be unaffordable for some. In addition, there are long waiting times in public facilities for certain services, and no formal system of waiting lists. In the Syrdarya pilot, new digital tools are being implemented for consultation bookings and queue management. Other barriers also exist, such as unreliable electricity and water supply to some rural health facilities. In a national self-assessment of water and sanitation services in 2020, only 57% of primary health care facilities reported having basic water services, and only 26% had basic sanitation services.

	Uzbekistan	Central Asia	WHO European Region	EU
Life expectancy at birth, both sexes combined (years)	73.9	73	78.3	80.9
Estimated maternal mortality per 100 000 live births	29	23.6	13	6.1
Estimated infant mortality per 1 000 live births (2019)	15.6	17.7	7.5 (2018)	3.5 (2018)
Poverty rate at national poverty lines (2018)	14.1 (2013)	14.1 (2017)	14.9	17

Notes: EU: the 28 EU Member States until 2020; GDP: gross domestic product; PPP: purchasing-power parity. Source: WHO, 2022b.

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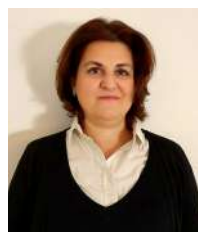
-Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation: infoMercatiEsteri

-German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Crisis Management

This new and unique column addresses how business owners, company executives, and sales personnel can improve their communication and business skills to be more successful.

We have interviewed Dr. Robert Edwab on how to handle a business, or personal, crisis.



Mrs. Silvia Borriello
Editorial Director
Infodent International
Publishing and Consulting House



Dr. Robert Edwab
Successful Global Congress
and Exhibitions Organizer; Professor,
Jack Welch Management MBA Program;
Numerous Membership Positions

Welcome Dr. Edwab. It is so nice to speak with you today to discuss how people in the dental and medical industries can improve their talents and be more successful. Briefly, tell us about yourself for those that do not know you.

Dr. Edwab – Hi Silvia. It is great to be here. I have been in the Dental and Medical field for over 40 years both as an Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon in New York and as the former Executive Director of the one-time largest healthcare event in the United States. Plus, I am a full Professor at the Jack Welch Management Institute Online MBA Program. That is why I feel I have so much to offer to help others improve and expand their talents.

Let's begin with a topic you feel affects everyone throughout their careers, "crisis management".

Dr. Edwab – A crisis could challenge us in our workplace and in our personal lives at any time. It could be as serious as something that could close our business down, severe enough to affect a personal relationship with a family member, or close friend, or something simple like sending an email to the wrong person. Following some basic principles could help prepare you, and everyone associated with a challenge, a potential solution and positive outlook for the future.

I never realized handling a crisis, whether personally or at your workplace should be treated the same. Please tell us what to do.

Dr. Edwab – First of all, act quickly. The longer you wait, the bigger the problem can get. If it is something you did or the company did, apologize sincerely and take responsibility. If something happened that was out of your control, explain what happened. Try to show the audience how important it is for you to find a solution by handling the problem yourself.

Now I see what you are saying. By addressing the problem, yourself, you are showing how important it is to you.

Dr. Edwab – Yes, and be compassionate and empathetic. Make your apology authentic and let your facial expressions and tone reflect how serious you are. Next, if it involves a large portion of your company, assemble a great team who can investigate and identify solutions. Make sure whoever is the spokesman for your company, whether it is you or your designee, answers questions honestly, consistently, and informs everyone that as soon as your investigation identifies causes and solutions, they will be immediately informed.

How would you communicate?

Dr. Edwab – If is one person offended, call them, or visit them. If it is a company chal-

lenge you might have to utilize many communication channels, i.e., social media, print, telephone calls, etc. Make sure all stakeholders internally and externally are kept informed.

I can see that once everyone understands what happened, and they begin to trust you again, after demonstrating honesty and transparency, what is next?

Dr. Edwab – Once you have determined what happened and why, you must introduce a solution to try and rectify the situation. The next and final step is most important; you have to learn from the crisis and make changes so the same crisis never happens again. The key is to learn and teach everyone so you can prevent a similar occurrence.

What can a person or company leadership learn from a crisis?

Dr. Edwab – The key is to reflect and learn. That will allow you to understand what happened, why it happened, and how it happened so you can use the knowledge and experience to prevent it from ever happening again.

Thank you so much Dr. Edwab for your discussion on crisis management. I know we are all looking forward to our next interview and another topic so we all can become better leaders.

For additional information, contact:
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Ms. Silvia Borriello: silvia.borriello@infodent.com - LinkedIn: Silvia Borriello

Medical Taiwan 2024: Unlocking Cross-Border and Cross-Sector Opportunities in Smart Medicine and Healthcare

Medical Taiwan, the premier international expo for medical, health, and care industries organized by TAITRA, is scheduled to be held at Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center Hall 2 (TaiNex2) from June 20th to 22nd, 2024. In the previous year, amidst the waning pandemic, the event successfully attracted nearly one thousand international buyers from 53 countries. Notably, a quarter of these attendees were high-ranking decision-makers or procurement personnel. Medical Taiwan serves as an invaluable platform for industry players to connect, fostering networking opportunities and expanding business horizons. Building upon its past achievements, the 2024 edition will focus on three themes—Supply Chain Gallery, Smart Medical, and All-age Healthcare—to facilitate businesses in seizing international opportunities across various sectors.

Smart Medical Pavilion Showcases Cutting-Edge Medical Devices Made in Taiwan

Medical Taiwan is backed and attended by key associations within Taiwan's medical device industry, such as the Taiwan Medical and Biotech Industry Association, Taiwan Federation of Medical Devices Commercial Associations, and Taiwan Bio-medical Care Association, all collaborating to create a comprehensive procurement platform for the medical device supply chain in Taiwan. Of these associations, the Taiwan Medical and Biotech Industry Association is planning to unveil the Smart Medical Pavilion this year. This pavilion will showcase high-end, cutting-edge medical devices made in Taiwan that have received both domestic and international permits for medical device launches and have entered mass production. Notable products on display will include the Kinguide Robotic-Assisted Surgical System by Point Robotics, CUSMED connectCMF Flap Fixator by Ossaware Biotech, EPROB Navigation System by EPED Inc., and Optima Prone, a specialized pressure-reducing support surface solution designed by Wellett, alongside various other surgical equipment and high-end implantable medical devices, which underscores the strength and expertise of Taiwanese industry players in manufacturing high-end and smart medical devices.

Medical Taiwan Showcases Smart Solutions for Digital Health and All-Age Care

With technology constantly evolving and mobile devices becoming increasingly prevalent, the digital health industry has experienced rapid growth. Research Nester projects that the global digital health market will reach an impressive US\$980 billion by the end of 2035, exhibiting a compound growth rate of 15% from 2023 to 2035. In the previous year, Medical

Taiwan introduced the Future Pavilion, a space designed to distinguish between hospital and home environments, showcasing smart solutions for both. This feature garnered positive feedback from visitors. In this year's exhibition, there will be a continued focus on digital health issues, highlighting the latest products and applications of smart medical care and all-age care driven by new technologies. For instance, dBio will present AIoT Wearable Stethoscopes and AIoT Smart Insole Sensors, while Hpb will showcase smart care solutions tailored for the elderly and infants.

M-novator, the Dedicated Space for Startup Exhibitors, Empowers Startups Globally

In 2023, M-novator received a positive response and is now poised to expand its international presence. It will provide startups with opportunities to launch their products, access demonstration sites, and cultivate partnerships. Participating startups will benefit from personalized interactions with a team of industry experts and consultants, gaining insights into business model development and effective fundraising strategies. Notably, startups from around the globe, including EYRIS from Singapore, specializing in AI-assisted diagnostic systems for retinopathy, and NEODOCS from India, offering AI-based diagnosis and health monitoring solutions, have already joined the exhibition.

Matchmaking Meetings and Networking Opportunities Expanded to Attract Buyers from the Asia-Pacific and Emerging Markets

At this year's exhibition, one-on-one matchmaking sessions will be set up for two consecutive days, bringing together international buyers and industry players. We have specifically reached out to buyers from the Asia-Pacific region and emerging markets. Anticipating over 100 matchmaking sessions, we are

also organizing a buyer networking dinner on the first day of the expo. Our aim is to attract both domestic and international buyers with substantial resources, facilitating connections between Taiwan's industry players and international markets.

Over 50 Forums, Lectures, and New Product Launches Unveil Trends and Facilitate Knowledge Exchange

Additionally, the exhibition will host over 50 forums, lectures, and new product launches, featuring seminars focused on the Asia-Pacific medical market. Esteemed speakers from Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam will be invited to share invaluable insights into local market dynamics and the healthcare industry. Their presentations aim to provide Taiwanese industry players with a deeper understanding of regional healthcare systems, market demands, and regulatory changes. Furthermore, a smart medical product launch conference will showcase the latest advancements in smart medical software and hardware, wearable devices, and IoT home care products. Brand owners will unveil these innovations to the public, enabling industry players to stay ahead of emerging trends and fostering the exchange of new knowledge within the field.

Medical Taiwan aims to establish a dynamic business and trading platform, providing industry players with the means to enhance their global presence and explore opportunities for cross-border and cross-sector exchanges. We strongly encourage industry professionals to take advantage of this opportunity by registering for the expo. For registration or more information, you can visit the exhibition website:

www.medicaltaiwan.com.tw for additional details.



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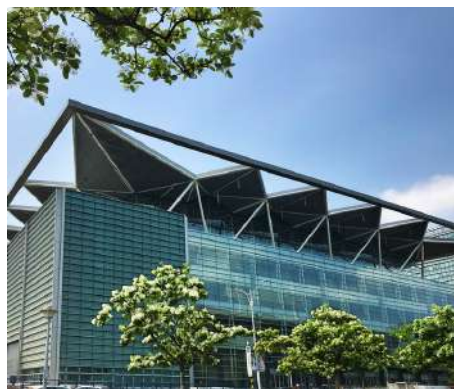
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Uzbekistan's First Children's Hospice, 1 Year On



World Health Organization

15 February 2024 - Located in the Tashkent region, the children's hospice Taskin ("Solace" in Uzbek) represents a significant milestone in the development of vital children's palliative care services in Uzbekistan. Knowledge and understanding of children's palliative care are limited among health-care professionals and the public, and Dr Rustambek Norbaev, Chief Physician at Taskin, hopes to help change that. He is firmly committed to further developing his own skills as a paediatric palliative care specialist, and to building capacity in the medical community.

"Two encounters set me on this path," Dr Norbaev explains. "The first was as a young medical student when I attended Dr Ziyaev Yahyo's lectures on hospice and palliative care. He was, and continues to be, an important mentor of mine, and I'm now in the fortunate position to be working with him. The second encounter was in 2019 when I met children's palliative care specialists from the world-renowned St. Jude Children's Research Hospital at WHO's Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer national meeting in Tashkent. They inspired me to devote myself to this field."

Uzbekistan, with a population of over 35 million, has 200 palliative care beds for adults across the country; however, these are limited

to cancer patients only. It is difficult to assess overall population need for palliative care services, but according to WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the incidence of cancer among those under the age of 15 in Uzbekistan in 2022 was estimated to be 10.7 per 100 000 population. This highlights the need for further expansion of palliative care services for children in the country.

Children's palliative care services

Currently, the hospice accommodates 20 young people with cancer and their parents. The facility is staffed by 4 doctors, 7 nurses, 2 psychologists, 1 social worker, 6 junior staff and a therapeutic dog-in-residence named Lisa. Each room is shared by a child and 1 parent,

and is fitted with a bathroom, television, telephone, refrigerator, air conditioning, heater and internet access point. The children can access an art room for painting and pottery sessions.

Young people are accepted from all over Uzbekistan without referral. All that is required is a recent hospital discharge letter showing a diagnosis of advanced cancer. All services for inpatients and their families are provided free of charge.

Dr Norbaev explains the services: "We provide pain management, anti-sickness medications and nutritional support for our hospice patients, and psychosocial assistance to patients and their parents. Generally, the period of stay is 10 days; however, depending on the situation, patients may remain in the hospice until the end of their



days. Depending on the availability of beds, we can also provide social respite services for patients receiving high-dose chemotherapy and pain management for patients with serious chronic pain syndrome.”

As in other countries in eastern Europe and central Asia, access to palliative care medication – in particular strong opioids – continues to be an ongoing logistical and legal challenge in Uzbekistan. Opioids are available for injection, and liquid morphine, which must be administered every 4 hours, is also available, but slow-release formulations are not. District-level oncologists are responsible for prescribing opioids, yet procurement and supply issues create a mismatch between what patients require and what is currently available.

In addition to limited access to strong opioids, another serious challenge for Dr Norbaev and the palliative care professional community is addressing the inherent fear and lack of knowledge among health-care professionals, children and parents related to prescribing and administering strong opioids. Many treating doctors and oncologists do not understand palliative care, the benefits it can offer and when it should begin.

Dr Norbaev believes this knowledge gap should be addressed urgently. “First of all, we need training seminars for doctors and mid-level

health workers. We need to ensure oncologists do not fear referring patients to the hospice. We also need to address parents’ concerns so that they understand that, in most cases, palliative care does not shorten life and can, in fact, extend it. They should be informed to make the best choices for their sick children.”

Dr Norbaev is a firm advocate of people’s right to access palliative care, and sees how it can improve the quality of care offered to patients and their families.

“The right to high-quality palliative care is a fundamental human right. Palliative care is an integral part of medicine. Developing a cohort of palliative care specialists will help improve overall medical care. Palliative care as a discipline is primarily concerned with a patient’s quality of life. It also teaches doctors how to hold difficult conversations with families and patients.”

Clear solutions

Integrating high-quality palliative care into health systems to ensure that all children who require palliative care receive it necessitates overcoming many challenges, including insufficient access to essential medicines.

While there is still much to do, advances have been made in the development of children’s palliative

care throughout Europe. Important work has taken place in developing pain management guidelines for children and for adults, and the objective now is to ensure they are used by all health-care professionals.

The current location of the children’s hospice near Tashkent is not its permanent home; it will be moved from this former COVID-19 hospital setting to the same site as the planned adult hospice. It is envisaged that this will serve as the main national hospice, with responsibility for training the workforce and organizing integrated palliative care across the country.

WHO’s work on palliative care in Uzbekistan

The cancer-control team at WHO/Europe supports policy development and offers technical advice and methodological guidance to strengthen health-care provision for improved childhood cancer diagnosis, treatment and outcomes throughout the WHO European Region. Uzbekistan is a focus country for WHO’s Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer. With the WHO Country Office in Uzbekistan and WHO/Europe’s palliative care team, the cancer-control team is working on improving access to and quality of palliative care for children and adults in the country.

The WHO Country Office in Uzbekistan was established in 1993 in Tashkent. The Office is the focal point for WHO activities in Uzbekistan. The country team consists of 14 people. The priorities for the Country Office are set out in the biennial collaborative agreement between WHO/Europe and the host country. The Office implements the agreement in close collaboration with national institutions and international partner agencies.

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