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Public Health in The Netherlands: Meeting the Dutch Social Medicine Residents

by Lilian van der Ven, MD, Amsterdam UMC



Current and future developments

For a number of years, the number of residents in social medicine has been lagging behind, resulting in an imminent shortage of social medicine specialists. To counteract this, in 2016 the Ministry of Health proposed a new approach to the residency where all residents are employed by one national employing organisation, rather than local health care facilities. This means that residents can gain working experience in multiple working environments, increasing the quality and the attraction of the residency. This entailed many changes, for example in the way how prospective residents are selected: formerly, employers decided if and when prospective residents can start their residency, now residents apply and interview for a placement. In March 2019, the first residents started in this 'national employership'. Although there are teething problems, it is now generally seen as a positive development. Currently, the national employership only applies to five out of eight profiles of society & health, but other profiles and branches hope to follow.

From 2021 an integrated four-year curriculum will be instituted for society & health, replacing the two-phase program and eliminating the possibility of becoming a profile doctor. This stems from the view that the society, foremost the patients need doctors who understand the full scope of (public) health care, the principles of care and prevention, and who can research, educate, innovate and act strategically. Within this new training program residents still have the possibility to focus on one of the five areas of expertise. The curriculum consists of various internships within and beyond the chosen area of expertise as well as research and a health policy internship.

International internships and EuroNet MRPH

An interesting 'side effect' of current and future developments in the social medicine residency is that the new curriculum with its various internships, might open up possibilities for international internships. After all, public health is a highly dynamic field, and therefore it is of vital importance for residents to

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develop their skills at established public health institutions across Europe, learning under supervision of experienced public health professionals. This is just one of the reasons that the Dutch national organisation of residents in social medicine (LOSGIO) has joined EuroNet MRPH, the European network of residents in public health. One of the pillars of this network is to facilitate exchange programmes and internship opportunities for medical residents in public health in all countries taking part in the association. EuroNet MRPH acts as a mediator between the residents and their desired internship institution, with the purpose of facilitating the process of acquisition of a placement. The network is actively looking for institutions that can provide young aspiring professionals with new knowledge and experience and who are prepared to host medical residents in public health.

Besides facilitating internships, the other two pillars of EuroNet MRPH are to share information on residency programs and develop a body of scientific research. It operated in this way since 2008 by connecting public health residents through meetings (three times per year in one of the member countries) and by developing scientific studies in working groups.

EuroNet MRPH Winter Meeting 2019

To end the story where it started before: The 2019 Winter Meeting of EuroNet MRPH will take place in... the Netherlands. From 5th to 7th December residents will come to Utrecht to work on EuroNet projects in order to learn from Dutch specialists in social medicine and public health. The aim of the organising committee is to provide the visiting residents with a taste of the broad scope of social medicine in the Netherlands. As it is described above, social medicine in the Netherlands has some unique features, for example it offers profiles of expertise and the close collaboration between Society & Health and Employment & Health. We strongly believe that this collaboration benefits the health of the population and hope to share examples for this in the meeting. Besides having lectures by Dutch specialists, some amount of time in the program will also be devoted to the EuroNet general assembly and to group works. Residents from member countries are welcome to join the meeting, residents from non-member countries are also welcome to join as observers. For any questions, please send an email to us. We hope to welcome many residents from all over Europe!

Interesting websites:

- [EuroNet MRPH](#): the website of EuroNet MRPH, the European association of medical residents in public health. More information about the Winter Meeting will be published here.
- [ARTS MG](#): information about the residency program in society & health under the new national employership (in Dutch).
- [Loggio](#): website of the Dutch association of residents in social medicine
- Postgraduate Medical [Education \(PME\) Project](#)

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