



Mobility of Health Professionals

Country studies:

Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and Ukraine

Funded by



Structure of the presentation

- Country studies
 - Main results – micro phase
 - Push – pull / stick-stay factors
- Politically relevant issues



Micro phase main points

- the research provided an opportunity for in-depth penetration in the processes
- for reaching down to the personal motifs
- to follow up the decision-making process concerning the most crucial decisions:
 - where and what to be the professional realization of health specialists,
 - which is the acceptable price for such decisions,
 - what are the obstacles and what are the prospects?



Micro phase – groups

- 1/ students of medicine (preferably in their last year of academic studies); BG -
- 2/ students studying for nurses or midwives (preferably in their last year of academic studies); 3/ physicians from outpatients' care;
- 4/ physicians from inpatients' (hospital) care;
- 5/ nurses from outpatients' care;
- 6/ nurses from inpatients' (hospital) care;
- 7/ emigrants medical professionals;
- 8/ immigrants medical professionals.



Bulgaria and Romania

Bulgaria

- 14 physicians and dentists,
- - 19 nurses working in hospitals and outpatient care in the country,
- - 5 students in the majors Medicine and Dental Medicine and Healthcare,
- - 11 Bulgarian health professionals working abroad, and three foreign nationals working as physicians in Bulgaria.

Romania

- workers (physicians, nursing professionals, dentists) – 21 interviews
- students (medicine and nursing care) – 12 interviews
- emigrants (physicians, nurses, dentists, other healthcare professionals) – 14 interviews in Germany, UK, Spain, Austria, Canada and the USA



Russia and Ukraine

- **Russia**
 - workers (physicians, nursing professionals, dentists) – 20 interviews
 - students (medicine and nursing care) – 18 interviews
 - emigrants (physicians, nurses, dentists, other healthcare professionals) – 2 interviews with a dentist working in Canada and a nurse – in Australia
- **Ukraine**
 - workers (physicians, nursing professionals, dentists) – 19 interviews
 - students (medicine and nursing care) – 16 interviews
 - emigrants (physicians, nurses, dentists, other healthcare professionals) – 3 interviews with a dentist working in Canada and a nurse – in Australia



Main results – macro/micro phase

Bulgaria and Romania

- Strong immigration pattern accompanied by outflow of particularly young health professionals
- Health system in transition as one of major pro-migratory factors
- Importance of language and historical links (Romania)
- Education as major pro-migratory factor (immigration):
 - Quick recognition of diploma after 2007 (EU membership)

Russia and Ukraine

- Regional disparities with regard to specialization places – Moscow and Kiev and other larger cities vs. rural areas
- Controversial results regarding the official and informal information (micro phase)



Bulgaria and Romania- workers

- there are distinct attitudes towards emigration especially among doctors and dentists between 25 and 40 years old;
- most preferred countries for both groups physicians and dentists are France, Germany, UK, Scandinavian, Spain, Portugal and also (but less desirable) Canada and the USA;
- there isn't clear intention to emigrate among the nursing professionals(with long term experience) but some of the interviewees have such motivation; most preferred countries are Germany, Switzerland, Austria, UK, Italy, Spain and France;



Bulgaria and Romania- workers

- the main reasons for emigration (pull factors) are: higher remunerations in receiving countries, better working conditions and higher standard of living;
- the main obstacles (stick factors) are: the family members and the **language**;
- according the respondents (especially doctors) the agencies play an important role in recruitment of migrant health professionals especially in Germany and Scandinavian;
- it is not surprising but it's a fact that many of the respondents rely on their friends to help them find a work.



Bulgaria and Romania- students

- the attitudes among the students are polarized – the medical students prefer to find work abroad, in opposite – the students on nursing care prefer to stay in the country;
- the main reasons for emigration (pull factors) for **medical students** are: better opportunities for specialization and career development and higher remuneration;
- the **students on nursing** care haven't clear intention for emigration mainly due to the language; also the students in this group feel some kind of insecurity and aren't ready to take this risk.



Bulgaria and Romania- emigrants

- in general the interviewees are satisfied with their work abroad;
- the most of the respondents work in healthcare but some of them are employed in other sectors (services);
- the host country attracts the interviewees with better employment opportunities, higher income (salary), better way of life and opportunities for family and better working conditions; for the younger respondents the leading pull factors are also opportunities for qualification improvement and better career development;



Bulgaria and Romania- emigrants

- main difficulties for the emigrants in the USA and Canada were the recognition of their diplomas and for the emigrants in the EU – the **language**; the both have difficulties with the new culture and the way of living in the host countries;
- the respondents don't feel different attitude from the local professionals and the patients;
- the most of them declared that they have intention to return in the home country but this intention is related with the indefinite future.



Russia and Ukraine - 1

- The medical specialists for which there is greatest **shortage** in both countries are the **physicians, nurses and pharmacists**.
- Among **physicians** the greatest is the need for **general practitioners, therapists, pediatricians, gynecologists, radiologists, oncologists and surgeons**.
- The shortage is not due to emigration and does not make the health establishments recruit personnel from abroad.
- The respondents are unanimous that there is no need for staff **import**.



Russia and Ukraine -2

- The **regions** in Ukraine for which the shortage of health professionals is particularly great are rural regions, Sumskaya, Luganskaya, Kirovogradskaya oblast, in particular, and the western regions of Ukraine as a whole.
- For Russia – all urban regions
- There is a steady trend in both countries for **mobility** of health professionals - from the rural to the urban regions and less from the public to the private health care establishments.



Russia and Ukraine - 3

- The majority of the health professionals who **emigrate** are physicians and nurses and the most preferred countries for them to emigrate are Europe and the USA. Some of the most desired destinations for employment are Israel and Germany, Libya, Poland and Canada.
- 2 person responded that they would emigrate to developing countries,
- 2 to Africa, Russia (from Ukraine).
- Still there is a steady preference for European countries as a destination of best choice.



Russia and Ukraine- 4

- It is unexplainable for the health professionals in both countries what could be attractive for the health professionals from abroad because it is neither salaries, nor the possibilities for career development, or working conditions, or the living conditions, etc.
- For some respondents it could possibly be the possibilities for practice, for others - the specialists and the cheap training.



Russia and Ukraine- 5

- **Emigration** certainly worsens the possibilities of the health system to effectively satisfy the needs of the population for health services.
- Immigration is virtually ignorable and the internal migration may worsens the state of the healthcare system but may also solve the problem with the shortage in the rural areas.
- According to several respondents, if the conditions for work and the health professionals' payment get better, many of them would return from other sectors of the healthcare sector to the medical practice.



Russia and Ukraine- 6

- The **immigration** of health professionals from other countries to Russia and Ukraine is generally agreed to be insignificant and the countries of origin are primarily Moldova and countries from Africa and Asia.
- Immigration **affects the health care system** in Russia and Ukraine negatively whereas the internal migration processes have a positive impact for the solution of the problems with the shortage of the health professionals in the rural regions.



Russia and Ukraine - 7

- **The main obstacles to emigration of Russian and Ukrainian health professionals include the fact that the diplomas of the higher medical schools in both countries are not recognized in Europe and have to be certified.**
- **As some of the respondents put it “it is not possible under national legislation”.**



Russia and Ukraine - 8

- The **recruitment agencies** for the of health professionals for work abroad are never heard of by the interviewees and, apparently, the respondents are generally unaware of special **policies** existing in Russia and Ukraine as regards the migration of health professionals.
- The main points that have to be included in the **policy** concerning the human resources in health care (and regarding emigration, in particular) should be focused on the improvement of the working conditions and the salaries in order to prevent emigration.



Russia and Ukraine - 9

- The **reasons** making them work abroad is the low remuneration and the lack of a place to live.
- The main reasons for making medical professionals work abroad are **financial** together with their dissatisfaction with their salaries and their prestige in society.
- What **retains** them there are again financial reasons.
- Although there are several respondents who claim that they are patriots and nothing could force them to work abroad.



Russia and Ukraine - 10

- **The main retaining factor** for the Russian and Ukrainian health professionals to stay in their native country is their family and the greatest advantage of working in their homeland is the possibility to stay together with the family and the relatives.
- Indecisiveness is one of the obstacles to leave the native country and the family is the most important retaining factor.
- The physicians with well-established repute report their clientele to be a retaining reason which has been created for the many years of their professional experience.
- Interestingly enough, serving their motherland is also pointed out as a retaining consideration for the physicians to treat their compatriots.



Push Factors Bulgaria and Romania

- Low salaries in health public sector
- Lack of resources and low level of working conditions
- Lack of career development opportunities
- Under-funded health system
- Low social status of the health professionals and poor job satisfaction
- Poor professional prestige
- Lack of economic security
- Unsatisfactory of healthcare reform



Pull Factors Bulgaria and Romania

- Higher rates of pay
- Increasing demand of health professionals
- Better working conditions
- Better training and professionals development opportunities
- Better quality of life
- Social and financial security
- Educational and training opportunities
- Better equipped and funded health care facilities
- Ethnic ties and historical links (Romania)
- Migrant networks (Romanian diasporas)
- Mutual recognition of doctors', dentists', nurses', midwives' and pharmacists' diplomas after 2007 (EU membership)



Stick Factors Bulgaria and Romania

- Low unemployment rate in health system / Vacancies in health system
- Insufficient number of physicians, nurses and midwives
- High number of hospital beds
- Lower cost of living
- Family responsibilities, social and cultural connections
- Free undergraduate training and specialisation
- Attractive private practice in primary and specialised care, dentist care and pharmacy
- Visa and work authorisation restriction outside the EU / Registration and licensing requirements in countries outside the EU



Stay Factors Bulgaria and Romania

- Remittances to the families in native country
- Promising career paths
- Reluctance to disrupt new lifestyle patterns and social networks
- Financial security
- Lack of return incentives



Push Factors Russia and Ukraine

- Low remuneration
- Lack of favorable working conditions in remote regions, small towns and villages



Pull Factors Russia and Ukraine

- Higher remuneration
- Better working conditions
- Modern technologies
- Career development opportunities
- Scientific activity opportunities
- Higher living standard
- Relatives and friends abroad
- Bilateral international agreements on the recognition of diplomas and degrees



Stick Factors Russia and Ukraine

- Population ageing – increasing needs for health professionals
- Low life expectancy – increasing needs for health professionals
- Non-communicable diseases increase – increasing needs for health professionals
- Large number of hospital beds – opportunities for work in hospital care
- High level of demand on medical services, low level of unemployment in healthcare
- Medical education is free of charge



Stick Factors Russia and Ukraine - 2

- Life-long training opportunities
- High prestige of health professions
- Constitutional rights of all Russian citizens to medical care free of charge
- Both working and non-working population are health insured
- Social benefits
- Homeland, family and friends
- Difficulties in diploma recognition abroad
- Insufficient foreign language skills



Russia and Ukraine - 3

- The most significant are psychological factors. Russia is the homeland that holds the person's heart and soul.
- The migration processes have positive effects for the migrants who enhance their professional qualification.
- Negative effects occur in the regions that have fewer health professionals.



Stay Factors Russia and Ukraine

- Higher remuneration
- Better working conditions
- Modern technologies
- Career development
- Scientific activity opportunities
- Higher living standard

