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WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

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PHARMA LOBBY GROUP WARNS EU COULD LOSE EDGE WITH THE PROPOSED LAW

The European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) warns that the European pharmaceutical sector could face increased competition from emerging markets, particularly China and the United States, in terms of research and innovation, if the proposed European Union health package is not amended.

The EC presented a proposal in April to revamp health and medicines regulations within the bloc, but the industry opposed it. While the EFPIA supports efforts to address the parallel medicines market, which it estimates to be worth over 6 billion euros (\$7 billion), it views other aspects of the package as detrimental. The proposed measures aim to reverse the decline of regional manufacturing, prevent drug shortages witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic, enhance access to healthcare and affordable medications, and eliminate the parallel medicines market that exploits price disparities among EU countries. However, the EFPIA believes that the package will lead to a 25% relative decline in research and development, as well as a decrease in Europe's global share of clinical trials from 25% to 19% if implemented.

According to the EFPIA, the proposed legislation introduces modernization to Europe's regulatory system, which has been relatively stagnant for the past two decades and lags behind the US in terms of speed. However, the industry group argues that the package significantly diminishes European intellectual property (IP) rights.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pharma-lobby-group-warns-eu-could-lose-edge-with-proposed-law-2023-06-21/>

THE RISK OF MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES IS RISING IN EUROPE

New data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) reveals that Europe experienced nearly as many locally acquired cases of dengue in 2022 as it did over the previous 11 years combined. There were 71 cases reported last year, primarily in France, whereas 74 cases were registered between 2010- 2021.

The ECDC held a press conference where they emphasized the increased risk of various mosquito-borne diseases in Europe, including *dengue*, *zika*, *chikungunya*, and *West Nile virus*. These risks are attributed to climate change and the spread of mosquitoes carrying the viruses. The ECDC director, Andrea Ammon, warned that if the current trend continues, more cases and potential deaths can be expected.

Controlling mosquito populations, enhancing surveillance efforts, and promoting personal protective measures were identified as key areas of focus. Although the rates of some mosquito-borne diseases in Europe have remained stable or slightly declined, others, particularly dengue, have seen a significant increase. Globally, dengue rates have been rising, with recent occurrences reported in the Sudanese capital and a surge in cases leading Peru to declare a state of emergency in most regions. The World Health Organization (WHO) also alerted about the potential for further infections due to the El Nino weather event affecting global weather patterns.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/risk-mosquito-borne-disease-increasing-europe-ecdc-2023-06-22/?fbclid=IwAR2-xjj7TVOq9OnikXXj4WQBuzVubFQGNGp29b5mgUcu6UkZcYj4Y6EfgXw>

REFUGEES IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM OF THE HOSTING COUNTRY

Refugees can play a crucial role in the healthcare system of the hosting country, thus providing a win-win situation for both sides. Poland's approach to incorporating refugees into its healthcare system provides valuable lessons for other countries.

In Europe and Central Asia are experiencing unprecedented pressure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in exhaustion among healthcare professionals. At the same time, the rising cost of living has contributed to a significant increase in job dissatisfaction. Consequently, healthcare workers in countries including the UK, France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and Germany have turned to strikes and work stoppages as a way to express their concerns.

Poland's example can be vital in terms of using the newcomers' potential. One key aspect is providing medical care in the refugees' language, which helps alleviate the challenges they face in navigating an unfamiliar healthcare system. By having refugee health workers who can communicate effectively with their fellow countrymen, there is improved empathy and service delivery. Integrating refugees into the health workforce also allows them to maintain their skills, enabling them to contribute to rebuilding their own country's health system in the future. This integration benefits the host country as well by ensuring a standard of treatment, increasing healthcare capacity, and improving the well-being of the local community. While this approach is not a complete solution to healthcare gaps in Europe, it offers clear advantages that should be supported and encouraged. Governments should embrace innovative and mutually beneficial solutions like Poland's initiative.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/6/20/refugees-can-fix-europes-doctor-crisis-polands-showing-how>

Thank you for your attention!

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