



SOCIETATEA NAȚIONALĂ DE MEDICINA FAMILIEI / MEDICINĂ GENERALĂ

Str. Grigore Cobălcescu nr. 2 Sector 1, București Cod poștal 010194

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Overview of Family Medicine in Romania – 1990-2011

History

The Romanian Family Medicine was reborn in 1990, first named General Medicine and later, in 1999, turned its name into Family Medicine, at the same time when family doctors became self-employed and where no longer State employees.

Gaining the status of clinical specialty led to a new University discipline of Family Medicine, vocational training through the residency program, a theoretical and practical examination in order to become a specialist in Family Medicine (equivalent of GP Principal in UK) and an optional higher degree through an examination after at least 5 years of medical practice (“*medic primar*”).

At the same time, as the specialty was gaining formal recognition, the organizational and professional activities were following their new paths. The regional associations of family doctors were being reorganised, the Romanian National Society (SNMF) gained a new statute, with the purpose, objectives and structure adapted to the new perspectives for the development of the specialty. The European Union offered great support, the MATRA (financed by the Dutch government) and NICARE (financed by the Irish government) programs helped with the formation of new trainers, the research development and the management of our organizations. The Romanian Family Medicine curriculum was developed with support from the Royal College of General Practice in 1992 when Dr. Philip R. Evans visited Romania

Between 2000 and 2010, the Romanian Family Medicine associations, including the National Society, participated in a series of national projects. The results of these projects have been the first of their kind in the healthcare domain in Romania:

- the first computer software designed especially for medical practice (MedIns),
- the first Sentinel Practice Network (MediNet),
- the first healthcare good practice guides (developed by the National Centre for Studies in Family Medicine – CNSMF),
- the first online communication networks for family doctors (*med-fam* online discussion board – 500 members, shut down in 2010; *medicina-familiei-grup* online discussion board – over 3100 members, still active).

Since the election of the new SNMF Board in 2009, the National Society initiated and is still constantly developing an increasing number of projects, unprecedented in the history of our specialty:

- two annual National Conferences,
- eight regional Conferences
- over 30 Workshops, Symposia, Summer Schools and Courses (regional associations)



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- the first newspaper dedicated to Family Medicine, distributed monthly for free nationally to 12000 family doctors (since October 2010),
- the first Family Medicine Handbook (Agenda) with guidelines and clinical updates, distributed each year for free to 12000 family doctors (since 2007)
- a Memorandum of Understanding with the RCGP and the Romanian Medical Society UK (SMR-UK) in order to further develop family medicine in Romania,
- partnerships in various projects for Continuous Medical Education and e-Learning, training of trainers for Family Medicine.

The Romanian family doctors are represented by two national organizations, working closely together:

- the National Society of Family Medicine (SNMF) - for professional matters - president Dr. Rodica Tanasescu

- the National Federation of Family Medicine Management Associations (FNPMF) - for business aspects - president Dr. Doina Mihaila.

These two national organizations as well as the Romanian Medical Council have solely a consultative role in connection with the relevant legislation issued by the Government.

The National Centre for Studies in Family Medicine (CNSMF) is a research association, contributing to the development of clinical guidelines for the family medicine practice

The current situation of our speciality

In spite of the existing legislation and the particularities of our distinct speciality, the Romanian political leaders are choosing to issue new discriminatory laws, resulting in the depreciation of Family Medicine by:

- softening, towards almost inexistent, criteria for entry into the Family Medicine training program,
- facilitating professional reconversion into Family Medicine without the need of vocational training,
- supporting hostile provisions in our contract with the National Insurance House which exceed the speciality requirements, etc.

We are extremely concerned by the fact that the authorities continuously refuse to discuss and negotiate with our national representative associations, although we have made numerous official requests for such meetings. Our written official complaints and suggestions regarding the laws issued by our Government, have all been ignored. We consider that these laws belittle our vocational training and our specialist status, enforce requirements that have nothing to do with the Family Medicine curriculum and add unfair and burdening tasks and financial obligations.

Under these circumstances, we consider that the Romanian Government has a profoundly hostile attitude towards Family Medicine. We feel that it has been acting against our professional development, against maintaining the quality and professional standards required by the European Union and against allowing the family doctors to exercise their freedom in increasing the quality of medical services provided to the citizens of our country.



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Therefore, over 11,000 Romanian family doctors believe that our Government's attitude is undemocratic, unprofessional and far from the principles of an adequate primary medical care.

The Board and the Senate Members of the Romanian National Society of Family Medicine are constantly working to promote our speciality and to increase the professional activity of our colleagues.

We are aiming to complete the projects which we have initiated and are planning to start new ones.

- updating and modernizing the training curriculum
- expanding the GP trainer network
- increasing the quality of medical services
- working towards consistent and standardized medical services

True to its WONCA member status, the Romanian National Society of Family Medicine is determined to take all the necessary steps, so that the principles of the European Definition of Family Medicine, which are the foundation of our speciality, are known by the public and observed by our political leaders.

Dr Rodica Tănăsescu,
President

Dr Răzvan Miftode,
Secretary, Chair of the Professional Department of SNMF

Dr Sandra Adalgiza Alexiu,
Secretary, Chair of the Rural Department of SNMF

Bucharest, 20 February 2011