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SESSION I: Problems associated with the lack of coordination in national and international health statistics

REGIONAL DATA BASE ON HEALTH SERVICE INDICATORS FOR THE BALTIC COUNTRIES

Supporting paper submitted by the Lithuanian Health Information Centre, the
Estonian Bureau of Medical Statistics and the Latvian Centre of
Health Statistics¹

Summary

1. Inter-regional comparisons are indispensable in evaluating health system developments especially for regions with similarities in socio-economical status and former evolution. Cross-boundary comparisons of regions in neighboring countries are particularly helpful when health and environmental factors are considered together. However such cross-boundary comparisons require establishment of a kind of international data base with sub-national disaggregation of data and appropriate harmonization of national definitions of different health indicators. Such joint Health Service Indicator (HSI) package has been developed jointly by three Baltic countries pooling together selected, most important and reliable health indicators at district level from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The package is regularly updated on annual basis and is disseminated among wide range of users. The package is based on Data Presentation System which allows user-friendly data display and comparisons in graphical form or maps.

¹ Prepared jointly by A. Gaizauskiene (Lithuania), R. Malbe (Latvia) and R. Psavke (Latvia).

2. The Baltic HSI package presently includes the following groups of indicators:

- vital statistics - total mortality, natality, natural increase, infant and perinatal mortality;
- incidence and prevalence of selected notifiable diseases;
- mortality due to malignant neoplasms, diseases of the circulatory system, diseases of the respiratory system and external causes;
- health care resources-physicians, other health personnel, hospital beds;
- hospital bed utilization - occupancy, admissions, average length of stay, bed turnover;
- lethality;
- abortion rates.

3. During the preparation stage national definitions were compared and specified, conventions and restrictions were agreed.

4. The package is used in all three countries by policy makers and health managers for assessment of

- trends in health care resources, particularly in relation to health system reforms;

- common features and peculiarities between countries in mortality patterns;

- maternal and child care aspects.