



Work profile of Belgian paediatricians in regional and university hospitals.

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INTRODUCTION

As in other European countries, Belgian hospitals encounter difficulties in recruiting paediatricians. In order to better understand the underlying problems and the needs, it is mandatory to have an insight in the work profile of paediatricians in Belgian hospitals.

METHODS

In 2007, a questionnaire was sent to the head of the department of paediatrics in all Belgian hospitals. They were asked to convince their paediatric staff members to fill in a detailed time sheet during one week in the period March 19-May 1st. The latter were asked to fill each 15 min which type of activity they were doing (outpatient clinic in or outside the hospital, emergency care, night or day hospitalization, technical exams, maternity, neonatal care, management, administration, teaching, research, ...) The time sheet was designed by the Belgian Academy of Paediatrics and revised and approved by the School of Public Health, UCL. Data were encoded by two separate persons and compared through a software.

RESULTS

474 paediatricians answered the questionnaire (66 % of paediatric staff members). The mean total professional time (Monday-Friday 7-21 h) was 50 h 16 min (male 52 h 51 min and female 48 h 20 min; Flemish 52 h 48 min and French-speaking 47 h 45 min). There is no difference in mean total professional time among paediatricians working in (non)university hospitals. The mean total professional time on Saturday is 6 hours. Paediatricians working in a regional hospital spent more time in clinical activities outside the hospital (11 h 24 min vs. 2 h 19 min) and less in management and research/teaching activities (6 h 12 min and 0 h 52 min vs 12 h 29 min and 5 h 10 min) (Table 1 & 2).

Type d'activité	Nb heures moyen	Nb heures moyen par groupe d'activité (Lundi-Samedi)				
Consultation hors hôpital « curative » ⁰	9h53	Consultations hors hôpital 11h24	Consultation & Urgences 26h39			Soins 39h04
Consultation hors hôpital « préventive » ¹	1h31					
Consultation hospitalière	13h29					Curatif hospitalier 27h40
Urgences	1h46					
Hospitalisation de jour	0h17					Activité totale 56h44
Hospitalisation classique	5h49					
Examens techniques	0h46	Hospitalisation classique 12h08	Hospitalisation générale 12h25			
Maternité	3h00					
N°/Salle d'accouchement	1h19					Non curatif ⁴ 10h17
NIC	1h15					
Management ²	1h59		Adm & Mngmt 6h12			
Administration ³	4h13					
Déplacements	1h52					
Formation complémentaire	1h22					
Enseignement	0h28		Recherche & Enseignement 0h52			
Recherche clinique	0h20					
Recherche fondamentale	0h04					
Autre	7h22					
Activité totale	56h44					
Dont : temps de garde	12h19					
Temps libre	27h10					
Avis médicaux tél	53					

⁰ Consultation hors hôpital - curative - cabinet privé, institution de soins, ...
¹ Consultation hors hôpital - préventive - ONE, médecine scolaire, ...
² Management: réunions et travail de gestion, d'organisation
³ Administration: courriel médical, certificats, ...
⁴ Hors consultations préventives

Table 1: Mean activity time (in hours) according to type of activity in regional hospital.

Type d'activité	Nb heures moyen	Nb heures moyen par groupe d'activité (Lundi-Samedi)				
Consultation hors hôpital « curative » ⁰	2h05	Consultations hors hôpital 2h19	Consultation & Urgences 15h24			Soins 30h28
Consultation hors hôpital « préventive » ¹	0h14					
Consultation hospitalière	11h28					Curatif hospitalier 28h09
Urgences	1h37					
Hospitalisation de jour	1h00					Activité totale 57h14
Hospitalisation classique	7h25					
Examens techniques	2h15	Hospitalisation classique 14h04	Hospitalisation générale 15h04			
Maternité	0h38					
N°/Salle d'accouchement	0h12					Non curatif ⁴ 20h59
NIC	3h33					
Management ²	5h34		Adm & Mngmt 12h29			
Administration ³	6h55					
Déplacements	1h17					
Formation complémentaire	2h04					
Enseignement	2h12		Recherche & Enseignement 5h10			
Recherche clinique	2h26					
Recherche fondamentale	0h32					
Autre	5h47					
Activité totale	57h14					
Dont : temps de garde	6h41					
Temps libre	26h46					
Avis médicaux tél	34					

⁰ Consultation hors hôpital - curative - cabinet privé, institution de soins, ...
¹ Consultation hors hôpital - préventive - ONE, médecine scolaire, ...
² Management: réunions et travail de gestion, d'organisation
³ Administration: courriel médical, certificats, ...
⁴ Hors consultations préventives

Table 2: Mean activity time (in hours) according to type of activity in university hospital.

CONCLUSIONS

The mean total professional time during the weekdays between 7 and 21 hour was 50 h 16 min. The mean professional time on Saturday is 6 hours. There was no difference between paediatricians working in a regional or in an university hospital.

Paediatricians working in a regional department spent more time in clinical activities outside the hospital and less in management and research/teaching activities. Globally, female paediatricians were working half a day less than their male colleagues. French speaking paediatricians were working half a day less than their Flemish colleagues.