

Abstract

The mobility of health professionals is of relevance for policy-makers as it impacts health labour markets and health services provision, where state intervention is justified due to extensive market failures. This dissertation collects data and evidence on the scale and impact of the mobility of health professionals to and from Germany, as well as within Europe, before and after the 2004 and 2007 EU enlargements; discusses problems related to monitoring mobility; explores the factors which influence mobility; reviews policy responses to health workforce mobility; and analyses trends and forecasts the stock of foreign health professionals in Germany. The dissertation employs qualitative (focus groups and interviews) and quantitative methods (panel data analysis) to give an indication of the extent to which the projected shortage of health professionals in Germany can be covered by foreign health workforce.

The mobility of health professionals impacts the availability, distribution and skill mix of the health workforce. However, the data on health workforce mobility are insufficient, and monitoring it remains a challenge. Stronger efforts should be made at national and international levels to monitor the mobility of health professionals and to factor it into workforce planning. The mobility of health professionals from Eastern to Western Europe has increased, facilitated by the 2004 and 2007 EU enlargements, although no mass migration was observed. Germany is a destination and a source country for mobile health professionals. Econometric forecasts suggest that the net inflow of foreign qualified nurses to Germany would not be sufficient to cover a substantial share of the projected shortage. To respond to the expected future demand for nurses arising from an ageing population, a range of measures would be needed in Germany to increase the attractiveness of the nursing profession and improve productivity in nursing and elderly care.