



Bundesärztekammer

Arbeitsgemeinschaft der deutschen Ärztekammern

Dr. Wilfried Kunstmann

- German Medical Association -

Substance abuse among Doctors in Germany

- Problem-size and Interventions -



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Number of doctors in Germany with a substance use problem



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Number of doctors in Germany with a substance use problem

Up to now no valid
German studies
are available





North-American Research Results :

USA

Hughes et al. 1992

9,600 Doctors

– written questionnaire



	life-time	within last 12 mth.
Alcohol abuse / -dependency	1.6%	6.0%

overall prevalence of

Substance abuse / dependency



North-American Research Results:

Canada

Brewster 1994

N = 1.500 doctors



„heavy drinkers“^{**}

Regular use of Benzodiazepine[°]

Occasional use of cocain

daily smokers

current use

6,0%

7,5%

0,2%

<10,0%

* = more than 4 alcoholic drinks per occasion resp. more than 60 drinks / month,

° = more than 1x / month



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North-American Research Results:

	Lifetime-Prevalence	Point-Prevalence
US-study (Hughes)	8%	2,1%
Canadian study (Brewster)	o.A.	6% - 7,5%



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Number of physicians in Germany with a substance use problem

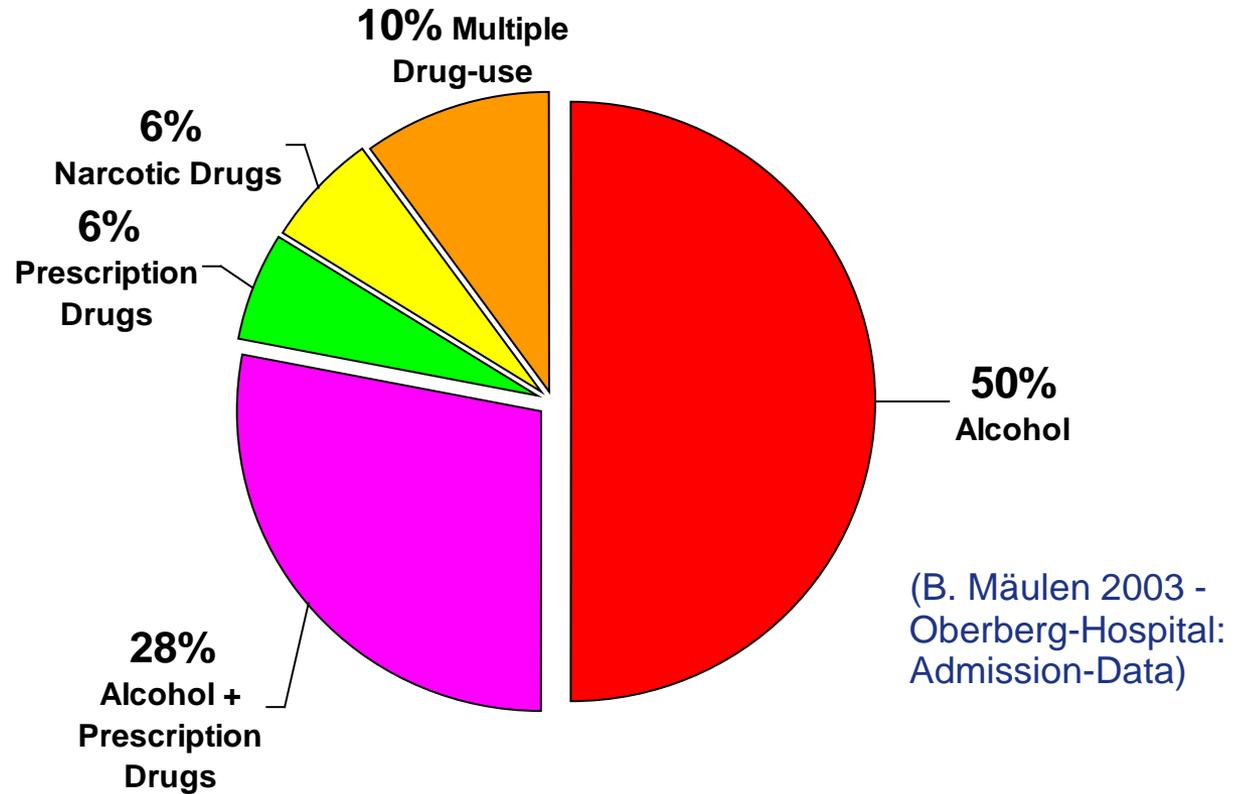
	doctors	overall population
Alcohol:	4-5% (estimated)	4,7%
Illegal drugs:	0,7%	0,9%
Smokers:	16,8%	34,8%
Benzodiazepine	13,6%	2,0%

Out of 333,600 practicing physicians
⇒ **15,000 doctors** in Germany with a substance use problem (estimated value)





Consumed Substances:





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Reasons for substance abuse among doctors



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Reasons for Substance-Abuse among Doctors

- Work stress
- Daily confrontation with suffering patients
- Helplessness
- Exaggerated expectations of self and others
- Easy access to addictive prescription medicine

Internal?

External?



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Therapy Barriers

- Reality-loss due to dependency
- Fear of stigmatization
- Doctor as patient-problem
- Fear of professional and economic consequences

Internal?

External?



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Legal framework for interventions



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State Licensing Authority

- Registration and issuance of medical licenses
- Decision on license suspension
- Decision on license revocation

Chamber of Physicians

- Registration of all doctors
- Professional code and supervision of the profession
- Ethical standards for doctors
- Disciplinary measures and proceedings

Registration bodies for Statutory Health Insurance Physicians

- Accreditation of physicians for participation in Statutory Healthcare
- Revocation of accreditation



Legal Framework

1. Federal Ordinance on Doctors (Bundesärztleordnung)

Revocation of license (§5(2) i. V. §3(1), Satz 1, Nr. 2 + 3 Bundesärztleordnung)

- when doctor shows unworthy and unreliable behavior,
- when showing physical or mental handicaps regarding proper professional performance.

Suspension of license (§6(1) in connection with §3(1), Satz 1, Nr. 2 + 3)

- due to loss of physical or mental abilities limiting his/her professional performance,
- when physical or mental abilities are challenged and a respective health-examination had been refused.



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2. Law on the statutory health insurance

- Regulations for statutory health insurance accredited physicians -

§95 (6) SGB V (Sozialgesetzbuch V)

„A doctor`s accreditation can be revoked,
when its prerequisites do no longer apply, ...
or contracted obligations have profoundly been violated.“

§21 Regulation on the registration of statutory health insurance doctors (Ärzte-Zulassungsverordnung)

„If a doctor is suffering from severe mental or other internal deficiencies
and therefore unsuitable to serve as a statutory health insurance
physician, in particular when he / she has fallen sick by a substance
dependency within the last 5 years before his application for accreditation,
his / her accreditation has to be revoked.“



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Notification of Chambers of Physicians regarding physicians with a substance use problem



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Number of notifications :

nation wide

50 – 70 notifications p.a.

(ca. 80% confirmed)

Substance use related license revocations :

< 20 cases p.a.

(estimates of Chambers of Physicians)



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Who notifies the Chambers of Physicians?

1. Notification by law enforcement authorities
(MiStra - Notification)
2. Patients
3. Staff / colleagues
4. Pharmacies
5. Anonymous notifications
6. Relatives
7. Personal notification
8. License Authorities
9. others



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Available means of intervention



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Chambers of Physicians` responses to notifications received

Conflict of interest



- Monitoring of professional duties and conduct
- Quality assurance / Patients` safety

Sanctions

- safeguarding doctors` welfare

Support



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Recommendations on handling physicians
with a substance use problem
by the German Medical Association
- 2006 -



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1. Installation of a contact bureau (Kontaktstelle)

- to receive, document and validate notifications
- to contact incriminated physicians, communication on charges
- to initiate diagnostics needed
- to inform on
 - therapeutic facilities,
 - potential support by chamber of physicians,
 - sanctions if non-compliant
- to conclude a written agreement
- to set up necessary arrangements with State Licensing Authority



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Persons to contact within Chambers of Physicians - online list -

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.bundesaeztekammer.de/30/Praevention/20Sucht/75Suchtarzt/75Suchtarzt/>. The page title is "Interventionsprogramme der Landesärztekammern für suchtkranke Ärztinnen und Ärzte". The main content area features a search bar with the text "Suche: hier Suchbegriff(e) eingeben" and buttons for "Starten" and "Erweiterte Suche". Below the search bar, there is a navigation menu with links: Home > Themen A-Z > Prävention > Sucht / Drogen > Suchtkranke Ärzte Suchtkranke Ärzte. The main heading is "Interventionsprogramme der Landesärztekammern für suchtkranke Ärztinnen und Ärzte". The text below explains that addiction is a relevant social problem and that the chambers provide support and care for affected doctors. It lists contact partners for the chambers of Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, including names, addresses, and contact information (phone, fax, email). A sidebar on the left contains a navigation menu with links like "BÄK im Überblick", "Gesundheitspolitik", "Ethik & Wissenschaft", "Patienteninformationen", "Presse", "Termine", and "Themen A - Z". At the bottom, there is a footer with the text "Perbig" and a taskbar showing the Start button and several open applications.

8. Oktober 2013



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2. Nomination of Physicians of Confidence

- to be contacted by the doctor as a confidential expert
- to accompany and monitor the therapeutic process
- to provide support regarding occupational, legal and personal matters
- to communicate with therapist
- to notify Chamber of Physicians when therapy has failed



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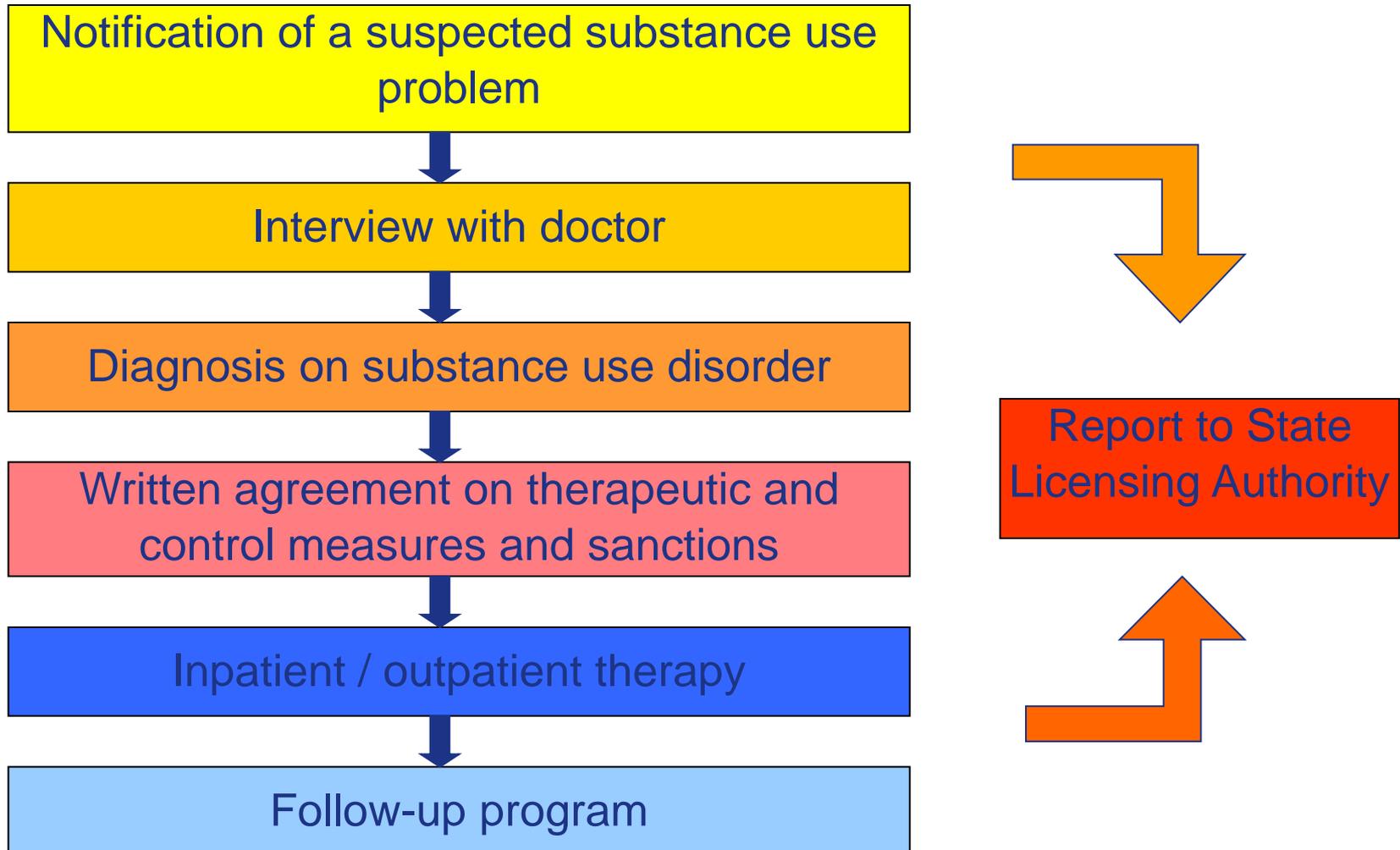
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3. Workplace related support by Chambers of Physicians

- provision of a substitute
- legal aid
- support funds



Steps of intervention in structured programs





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Chambers of Physicians with a structured intervention program

– survey results Jan. 2009 -

- in existence: in 10 out of 17 chambers
- in stage of development: 2 chambers
- non-existent: 5 chambers



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Problems still to be solved:

- Intervention programs in all chambers
- procedural rules for interaction with State Licensing Authority
- transparent procedures for assumption of therapy costs by physicians` pension funds
- assumption of therapy costs by private health insurance plans
- amendment of the „Regulation on the registration of statutory health insurance doctors“



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Thank you for your attention!



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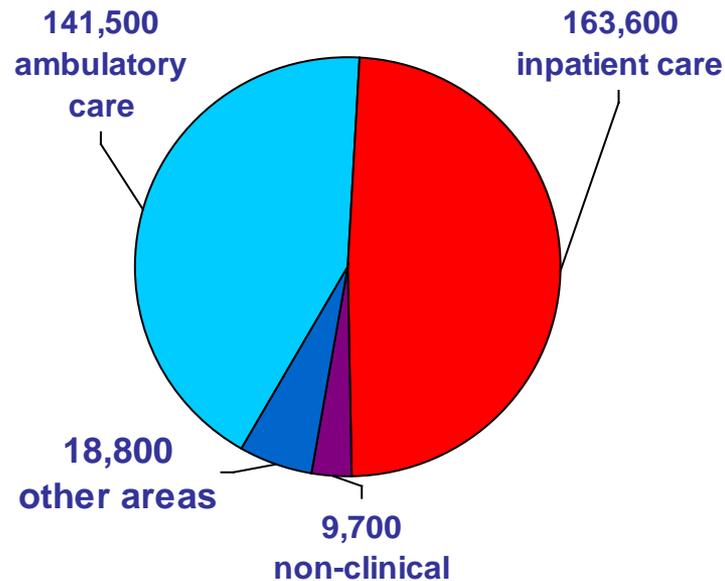
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- Number of doctors in Germany with a substance use problem
- Reasons for substance abuse among doctors
- Legal framework for interventions
- Notification of Chambers of Physicians regarding physicians with a substance use problem
- Available means of intervention
- Problems to be solved



Number of physicians in Germany

Total: 333,600 physicians



3.5 physicians per 1,000 inhabitants



Number of physicians in Germany with a substance use problem

Study on Consumption of alcohol, cigarettes and illegal substances among doctors in private practice in the States of Brandenburg and Saxony (N = 642)

	male doctors	female doctors
Harmful drinking (>60g/d resp. >40g/d)	17.5%	1.9%
Hazardous drinking (>40g/d resp. >20g/d)	5.8%	5.8%





Number of physicians in Germany with a substance use problem

Study on stress-related consumption of alcohol and/or prescription drugs among doctors – anonymous online-questionnaire, (N = 1.287)*

„Consume alcohol and/or prescribed drugs to reduce work-related stress“			
	Partly true	true for most occasions	Agree strongly
Doctors (male and female, all disciplines)	11%	9%	3%

* Geuenich K (2009)



Prävalenz von Abhängigkeitserkrankungen in der Ärzteschaft im Vgl. zur Bevölkerung

