

France in the News

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The future for innovation on health and independence

From 28 to 30 May Paris is the venue for the major annual gathering on health and independence. For this edition three trade shows welcome health professionals (directors of establishments, nurses, nursing assistants and medical practitioners): “Hôpital Expo”, “Geront Expo” and “HIT Paris” bring together manufacturers and experts in the health and independence sectors and the new technologies dedicated to both.



With nearly 12% of its GDP devoted to the health sector, France is the OECD country that spends most in this area. According to the latest report from the French general inspectorate for social affairs, hospitals account for 35% of all expenditure on health, compared with 29% in the other OECD countries. Employing 1.2 million people, hospitals and health remain key sectors for France, a country whose expertise is acknowledged.

Foreign visitors, especially from China and Morocco, are expected in the aisles of the health and adult care trade shows. Stéphane Pic-Pâris, organiser of the event for the Fédération Hospitalière de France (French Hospital Federation) points out that *“In total, 8-9% of the expected 20,000 visitors are from abroad”*, adding that, *“they come to find out about France’s expertise”*.

The 600 mostly French exhibitors include representatives of all the sector’s major corporate groups such as Dekra Industrial, Drager Medical and Agfa HealthCare. However, SMEs (80%) dominate the event. Allibert Medical is a specialist manufacturer of modular medical furniture. Edra Medical designs laboratory benches for medical suites. Onze Plus markets “Melo” the first music terminal for use in retirement homes. Its project has been establishing itself in France, Switzerland and Belgium for the last four years and is looking this year to conquer new markets in Europe.

The operating theatre of tomorrow

Seeking to cope with the recession and keep up with a changing medical world, all actors are innovating. Demonstrations centred on clinical and biomedical engineering will be open to health professionals, such as the *Operating Theatre of Tomorrow* by the French biomedical engineers’ agency in partnership with manufacturers exhibiting in the trade shows.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Stéphane Pic-Pâris says that *"In the health domain, this year a group of businesses from northern France - "Clubster Santé" - is proposing a comprehensive system for optimising the organisation of outpatient care in hospitals with a view to enhancing the wellbeing of patients and the work of the healthcare personnel"*. In 2012 the same companies were presenting the hospital room of the future in the "Concept Room" project.

More and more facilities are taking up telemedicine, or e-health. This is because new technology can make the work of health personnel easier and help optimise patient care.

Ranging from medical imagery to the fitting out of retirement homes, and including catering and hygiene, the goal of the manufacturers is to win over the purchasing managers of French hospitals.

Procurement networks like RESAH (*Réseau des Acheteurs Hospitaliers*) in the Paris area or UNIHA (co-operative purchase of public hospitals) are on the lookout at the show. As its organiser points out: *"They come to find out more about products they will be involved in selecting in competitive tender procedures in order to equip or renovate their facilities"*.



From patient admission to longevity management

These shows are also an opportunity for managers of health facilities to meet in seminars and discuss the issues for their sectors. The recurrent issue of patient admission and bed management in establishments will be a particular focus for debate. The show organiser adds: *"While this is a question that is essentially political, answers can also be found with innovative IT systems, telemedicine or home hospitalisation"*.

The issue of lengthening life expectancy and the ever-increasing need for systems and organisations for the care of the elderly is the other major concern for the health world. In this area Michèle Delaunay, the Minister Delegate for Elderly People, announced at the end of April an additional budget of €220m for retirement homes and medical welfare centres. A total of €720m is to be mobilised for the sector in 2013.

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