

Development of Education, Certification and Accreditation in Sleep Medicine by National Sleep Societies in Europe during 2010 – 2013

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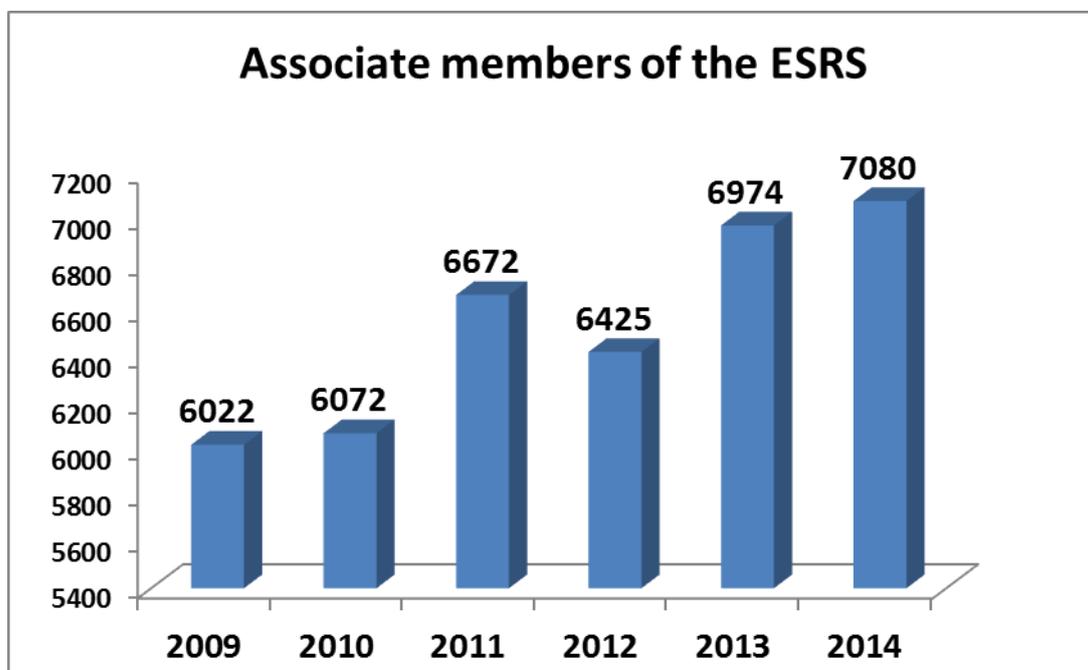
Executive Committee, Assembly of National Sleep Societies, European Sleep Research Society

Background

The Executive Committee of the ANSS started to collect several informations from the national sleep societies in order to get a picture of the ongoing developments. The data presented in this report are based on annual questionnaires send out to the presidents of the National Sleep Societies prior to the Annual meeting of the ANSS. The number of responders to this questionnaire are stable from year to year (24 (2010), 23 (2011), 26 (2012) and 24 (2013), respectively), 15 sleep societies reported their data in all 4 years.

Development of members in European National Sleep Societies 2010-2013

Most countries have an increase or a stable number of members in the societies. The total number of associate members of national sleep societies increased from 6022 in 2009 to 7080 in 2014.



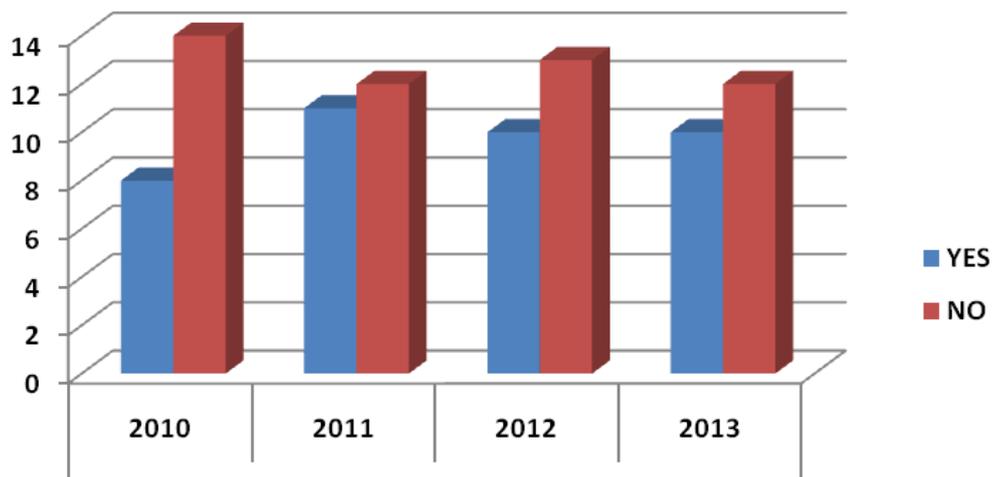
In this report three major questions have been investigated:

1. Procedures for the **certification of Sleep Medicine Specialists**
2. Procedures for the **accreditation of Sleep Medicine Centres (SMCs)**
3. Status of **graduate and postgraduate education** in Sleep Medicine.

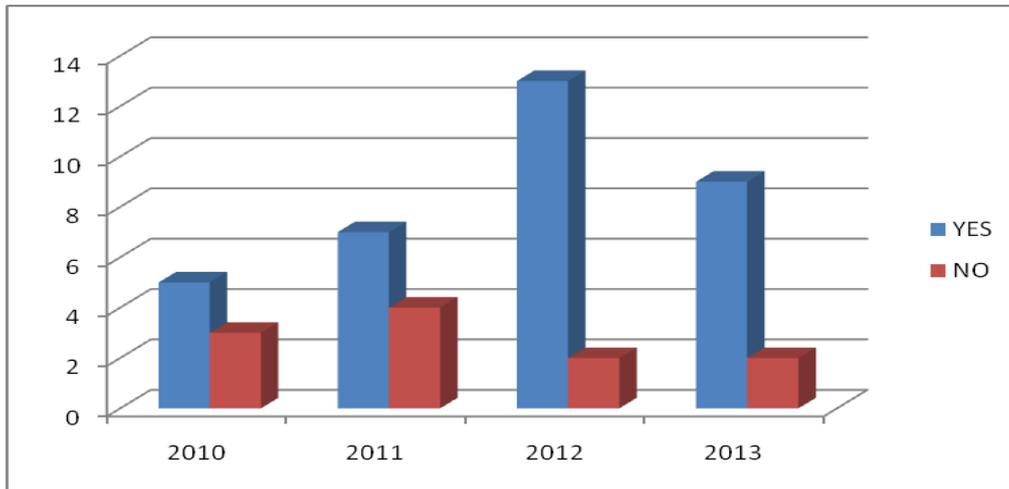
1. Certification of Sleep Medicine Specialists

Following the published paper describing the certification process for sleep medicine specialists, (Pevernagie et al, 2009), an increasing number of countries reported to have implemented a procedure for certification of Sleep Medicine specialists. However, this number remained stable and did not further increase in the subsequent years. In addition, the number of countries planning to implement a certification process rather declined with time.

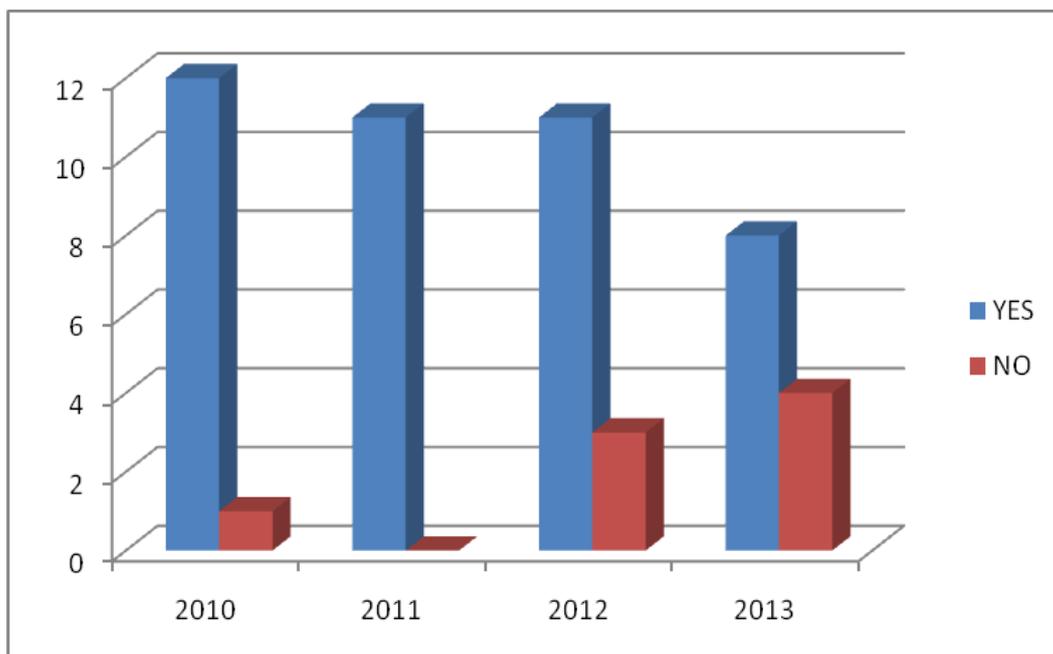
Does your NSS have a formal procedure for the certification of sleep specialists?



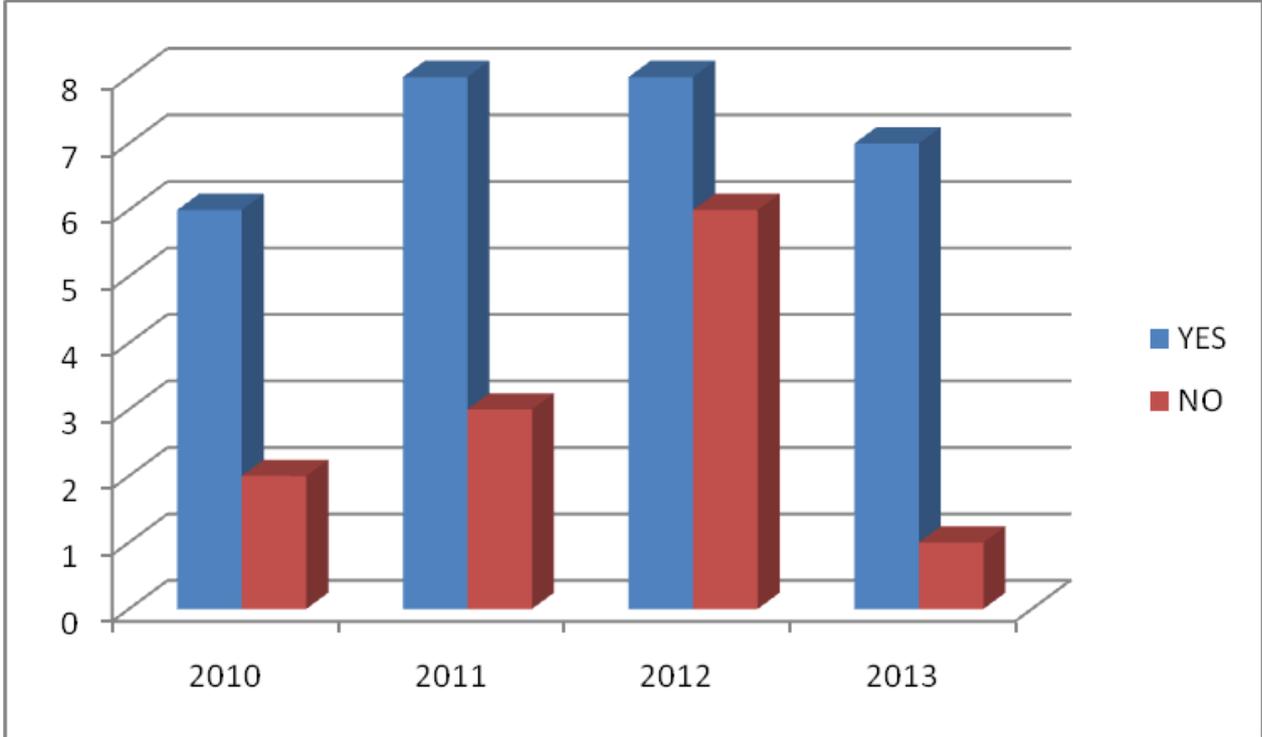
Was the certification process implemented according to the European Guidelines?



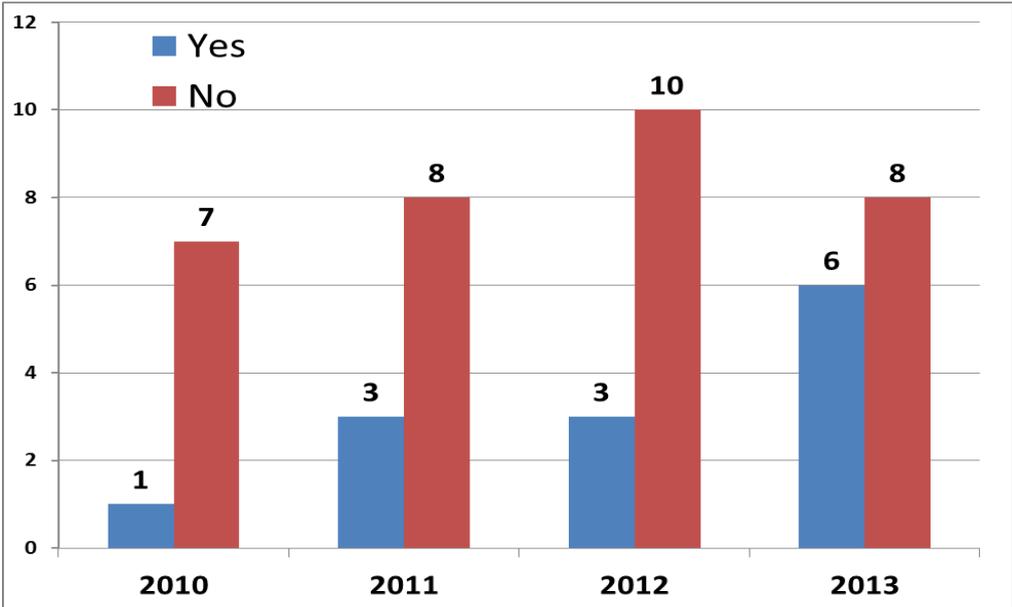
If not, do you intend to develop such a certification process in the near future?



The candidate must succeed an examination in Sleep Medicine?

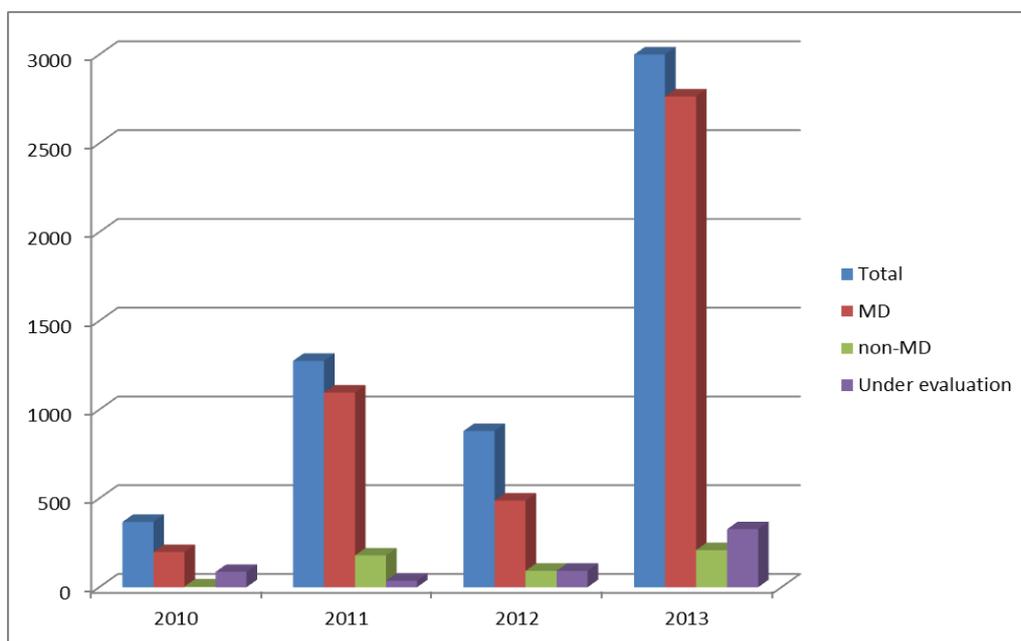


Is the certification process officially endorsed by the Health Authorities of your country?



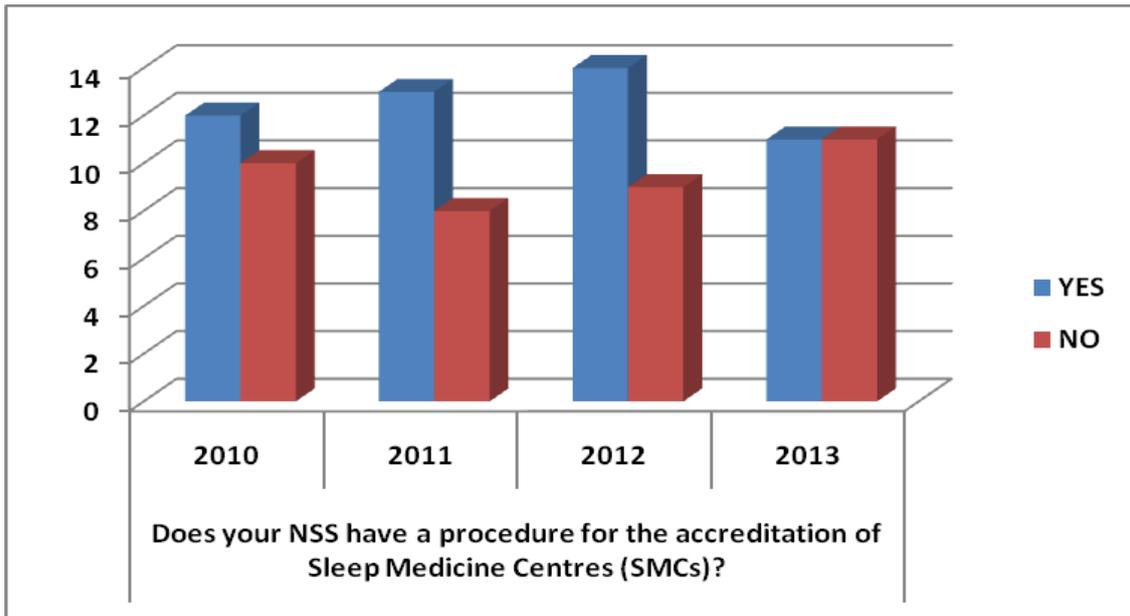
There is constant raise of countries where the sleep medicine specialist is officially endorsed by the health authorities of the country. Today these countries are Germany, Finland, Spain, Romania, Portugal, and Hungary.

The certification process was implemented according to the European Guidelines (Pevernagie et al, 2009) in 12 countries. The certification started often as an initial grandparenting process and developed to a certification process after a certain time window of clinical and theoretical training. The sharp rise observed in the years from 2011/12 to 2013 is partly explained by the fact that France reported their number (n= 1400) in 2013 for the first time. However, there is a continuous increase of certified sleep medicine experts in Europe.

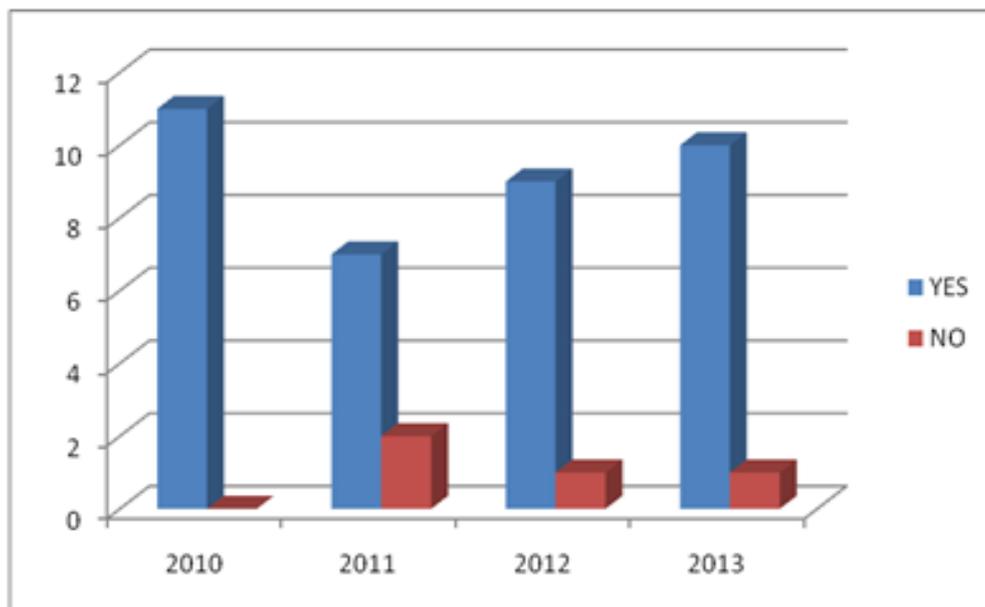


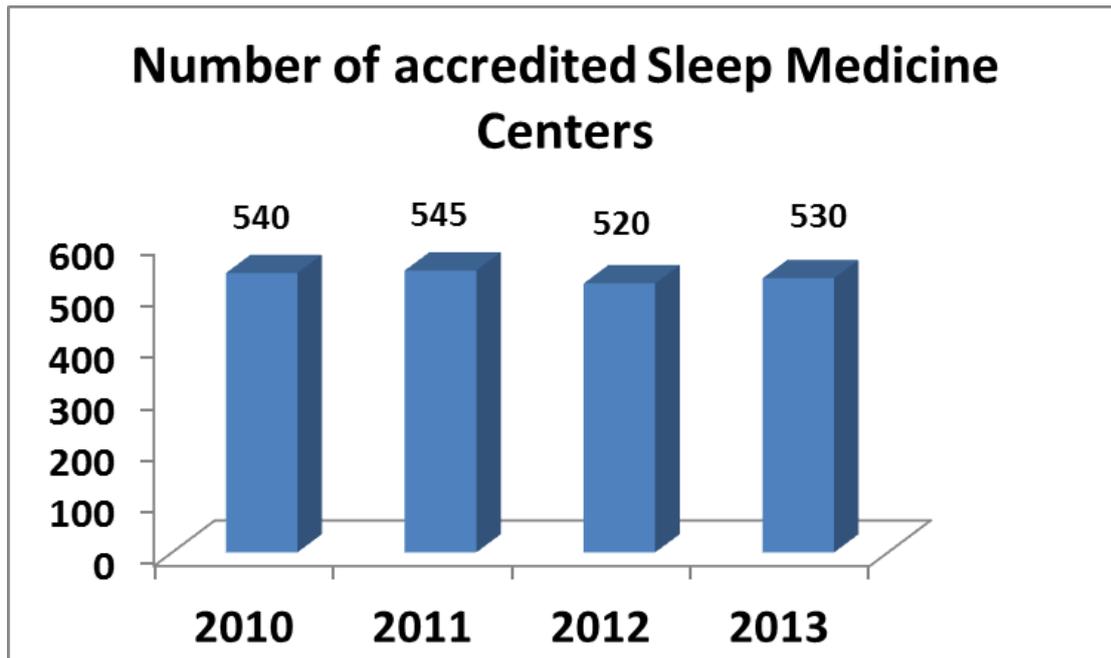
2. Sleep Medicine Centers (SMCs)

Several national sleep societies have implemented a procedure for accreditation of a SMC. The majority of countries reported that help from ESRS would be helpful with homologation of a certification process, visiting accreditation's officers, implementing the European guidelines, quality assurance guidelines, direct accreditation, and homologation of national accreditation.



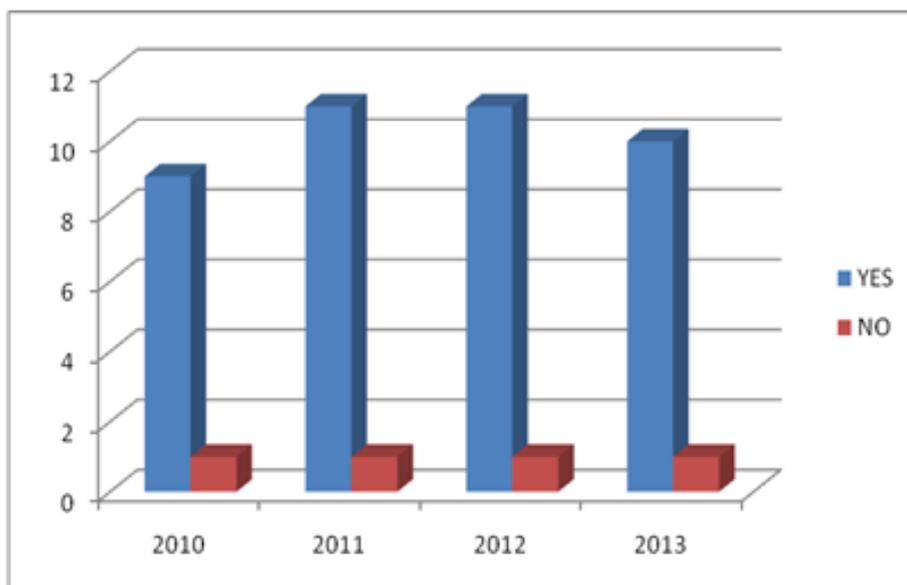
Do you intend to develop such an accreditation process in the near future?





The number of accredited SMC is constant in the 12 countries reporting to have accredited SMC's.

Was the accreditation process implemented according to the European Guidelines?



The accreditation started from 1996-2010 and was implemented according to the European Guidelines (Pevernagie et al, 2006) in 12 countries (Austria, Great Britain, Czech Republic, Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherland,

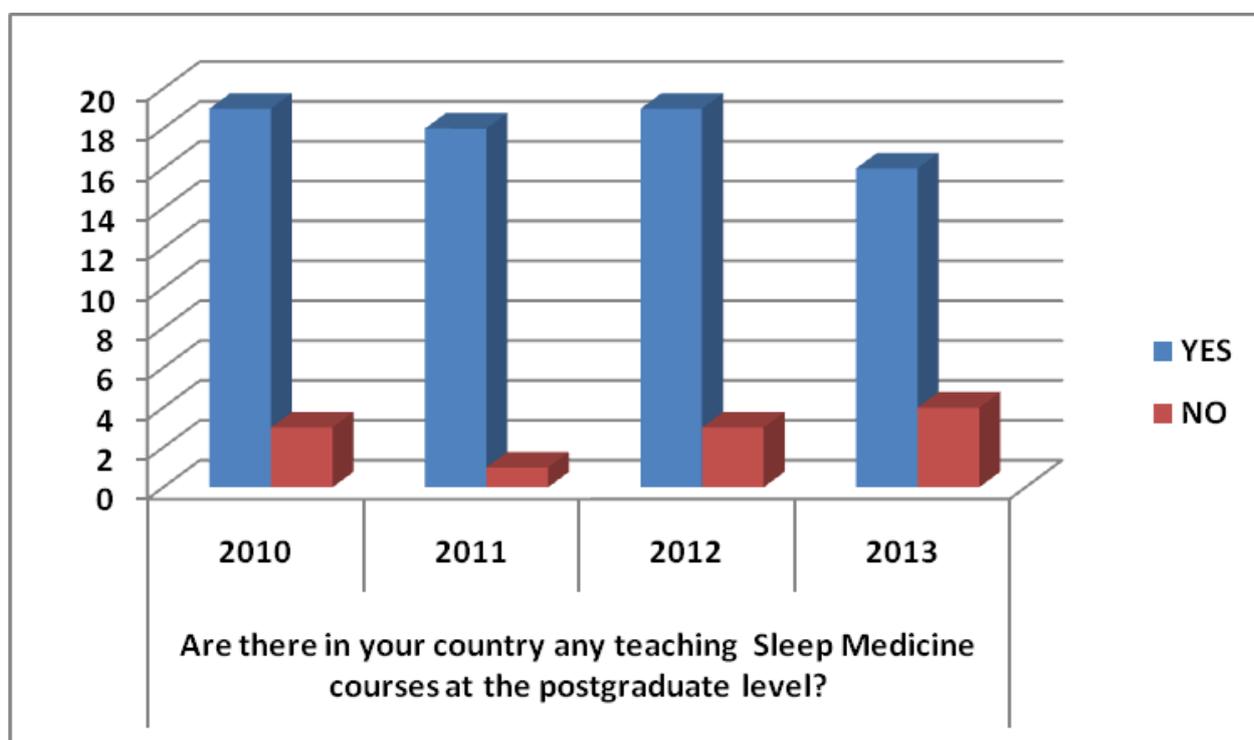
Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey). The procedure was not endorsed by health authorities in none of the countries.

3. Graduate and postgraduate education in Sleep Medicine

Teaching courses in Sleep Medicine are organized by the National Sleep Societies in 23 of 26 countries. Support from ESRS was considered to be helpful by 13 of 26 countries.

Graduate and post graduate education was reported by 24 of 26 countries. Sleep Medicine is a part of the medical specialist training in 18 of 26 countries.

A large number of additional educational activities were reported: Courses arranged by the NSS, inter university courses, programs prepared by local Universities and by National Sleep Societies, ESRS courses, public activities, (e.g. world sleep day, national sleep day, narcolepsy day etc.).



Conclusions

The number of certified sleep medicine specialist increases over time but the total number is still very low.

The number of countries increased where health authorities accepted the sleep specialist certification at different levels of medical specialization (subspecialty vs. area of competence)

The number of accredited Sleep Medicine Centers is low and do not increase. Many countries plan to start the accreditation procedure but there is no trend visible that this process takes off.

There is a need for further improvements:

- Accreditation of sleep medicine specialist (medical and non-medical)
- Accreditation of sleep medicine centers
- Graduate and postgraduate training

There is a large diversity of sleep medicine education practiced within and outside the National Sleep Societies. Increasingly, formalized University and Master programmes as well as PhD programmes, postgraduate courses have been locally developed. However, a systematic and formalized process has not been accomplished yet in Europe. The recently published Catalogue of Knowledge and Skills (Penzel et al. JSR 2014) may be helpful tools to generate more structured educational programs for different categories of health professionals.

Parts of the sleep medicine curriculum are included in the medical curriculum in some specialist training programs (pulmonary medicine, neurology, ENT surgery, psychiatry) in most but not in all European countries. Sleep medicine as a whole is not implemented in any specialist training in Europe.

A number of challenges were pointed out by the presidents of the NSS:

Governmental policies differ between European countries, University and Academic Rules may complicate the implication of sleep medicine as Master programs, sleep medicine is multidisciplinary, transversal medical area which may create conflicts between existing medical specialties and scientific societies. Reimbursement for sleep medicine services, research founding and industry support varies substantially between countries which at least in part explain the differences in the evolution of sleep medicine practice in the different ANSS membership countries.

The data for this report was generated by the presidents of the National Sleep Societies; analyses were performed by S Mihaicuta, P Jennum and L Grote.

The report was written by the Executive Committee of the ANSS (Michaela D Gjerstad, Marta Goncalves, Javier Puertas, Stefan Mihaicuta, and Ludger Grote).
June 2014