

Income of medical doctors in Germany

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The relative income of clinical faculty members *vs.* science faculty members in academic fields was discussed in a recent issue of *Quant Imaging Med Surg* (1). This letter presents income of medical doctors in Germany. Though this is a complex matter because it depends on so many factors, however, some trends are clear.

In Germany to work in hospital usually means both high work load and low pay in relative terms, so that some new doctors prefer industry or other jobs (2). There are four different kinds of hospitals in Germany, depending on who operates them: community hospitals, university hospitals, private hospitals, and hospitals operated by a church or religious organization. Their salary structures don't differ too much in the first year of employment. In their first year, doctors will roughly get 4,000 Euro/month, and after 3-5 years this can grow to more than 5,000 Euro/month before tax (3,4). With additional training towards a specialist (Facharzt) a doctor can start in a university hospital at around 5,600 Euro/month, increasing to a maximum of less than 7,000 Euro/month in 12 years (3,4).

The average monthly salary of all professions in Germany is less than 3,500 Euro before tax. However, there are differences between east/west Germany and male/female. Overall new doctors in their first year will earn less than twice the average national salary in a hospital but need to work many more hours.

Tax and other deductions are traditionally very high in Germany (approximately 40%). To give an idea, if you have an annual salary of 41,000 Euro, you will earn about 2,000 Euro/month after tax and other deductions.

Note that in Germany, only head physicians can negotiate their salaries. About 40% of head physicians earn between 125,000 and 400,000 Euro/year on average (3). They can

make more money, if they are allowed to have privately insured patients. However, it is hard to get there and new contracts are not as good anymore as they used to be.

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