



## **General Practitioners Must Be More Firmly Incorporated into Measures for the Promotion of a Healthy Lifestyle**

- **Key role in the issues of smoking, alcohol and nutritional habits**
- **Psychological training and more time necessary for patient dialogue**

General practitioners play a key role in every effort to implement a healthier lifestyle in the population. The physician's expertise provides him or her with the opportunity to have a different and frequently far more effective impact on patients than others and to influence their behaviour. This was the conclusion of the experts at the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG), which is taking place from 1 to 4 October 2006 in Bad Hofgastein and with more than 620 high-profile participants is the leading health policy event in the EU.

“Unfortunately, this key role often exists only in theory,” Reiner Brettenthaler, vice president of the European Union of General Practitioners, says with regret. “In practice there is often simply too little time to conduct in-depth discussions about the risks and consequences of their lifestyle with patients.” This problem can only be solved by a reduction in the number of patients per physician and by adequate compensation for the time spent in patient dialogues.

Brettenthaler also demands an increase in the range of educational and further training options for physicians on the subject of smoking, alcohol and bad nutritional habits. Special psychotherapeutic training for therapeutic dialogue is particularly important. “The battle against addictive behaviour is an enormous challenge, thus practical training also facilitates substantially higher success rates.”

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