

Medical certificate of disability: a descriptive analysis of Aveiro region, from 2010 to 2016

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Background:

In Portugal, Public Health Physicians attribute the medical certificate of disability (MCD). This document is mainly used for fiscal benefits or from other kind, as priority parking card and non-medical public services are increasing its requirement. The threshold to determine benefits is 60% of incapacity by law. Oncological, musculoskeletal and psychiatric diseases account for most of the cases. This activity is highly time-consuming and is not part of the Essential Public Health Operations or the competences of Public Health Physicians according to the Medical Professional Order. The aim of this study is to characterize the evolution of this procedure and the obtained incapacity values from 2010 to 2016 in the Public Health Unit of Baixo Vouga Primary Healthcare Cluster.

Methods:

A descriptive analysis was made with the registers of production of MCD in four municipalities of the Aveiro Region from 2010 to 2016.

Results:

An increase in the number of MCD was verified, going from 274 in 2010 to 550 in 2016, in a total of 3087. Two thousand and fifteen was the year with the greatest frequencies, with 632 certificates. The median value of incapacity was 60% (64% of total MCDs), with an interquartile amplitude of 12, varying from 6% to 99%. Incapacity values have an increasing tendency over the years, showing a cohort effect.

Conclusions:

The increase of MCD reflects an enormous burden for the Public Health Services that consequently have fewer resources to deal with Essential Public Health Operations. Human resources or task distribution should be rethought in order to respond to population's needs. Cohort effects might be

explained by the law-fixed re-evaluation, required every 5 years for oncological cases. In fact, this incapacity is the main cause of requirement of the MCD. Further studies should address this problematic in order to better organize the health services and understand the effectiveness of this procedure.

Key messages:

- The number of issued MCD is growing, overloading Health Services.
- The median incapacity is 60%, which is the threshold to attribute benefits. Further investigation is needed to address this issue.