

The Role of Community Pharmacists in the Primary Health Care Team Work

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1 Introduction

Lack of the general practitioners in the rural regions is actual issue for some countries. Sometimes the paradox situation occurs when the community pharmacy or branch pharmacy is located in the rural, but pharmacist doesn't have the rights to manage the patient treatment. The pharmacist often is an alone full-time health professional in concrete rural district, but can't provide prescription medicines to chronic diseases patients or in acute situation without prescription of general practitioner.

2 Aims

The purpose of this research is to investigate the experience of the United Kingdom in implementation of supplementary prescribing by pharmacists and to identify other possibilities to improve the accessibility of medicines in rural regions.

3 Methods

The information on supplementary prescribing by pharmacists in United Kingdom was obtained from a literature review and situation in Latvia was analysed in light of the statistical data.

4 Results

The results of the research create the following statements:

- the experience of United Kingdom on supplementary prescribing by pharmacists shows some barriers for successful implementation of this practice, as well as its advantages, particularly in regions with lack of general practitioners;
- the statistical data of Latvia (Figure 1 and Figure 2) show that the pharmacists mostly can cover the regions with lack of general practitioners and telecommunication facilities are sufficient for virtual term work;
- the pharmacists should have additional training to fulfil the supplementary prescribers functions in accordance with a clinical management plan agreed with a general practitioner and patient;
- the supplementary prescribing by pharmacists is appropriate decision for solving partly the problems of the accessibility of the primary health care in rural areas, particularly in acute situations too;
- questionable issue is the situation in which the pharmacist is a prescriber and a supplier at the same time;
- taking into account low profitability of the rural pharmacies, the capitation system implementation with additional payment for quality criteria is discussible.

Figure 1 Number of general practitioners per 10 000 inhabitants in Latvia

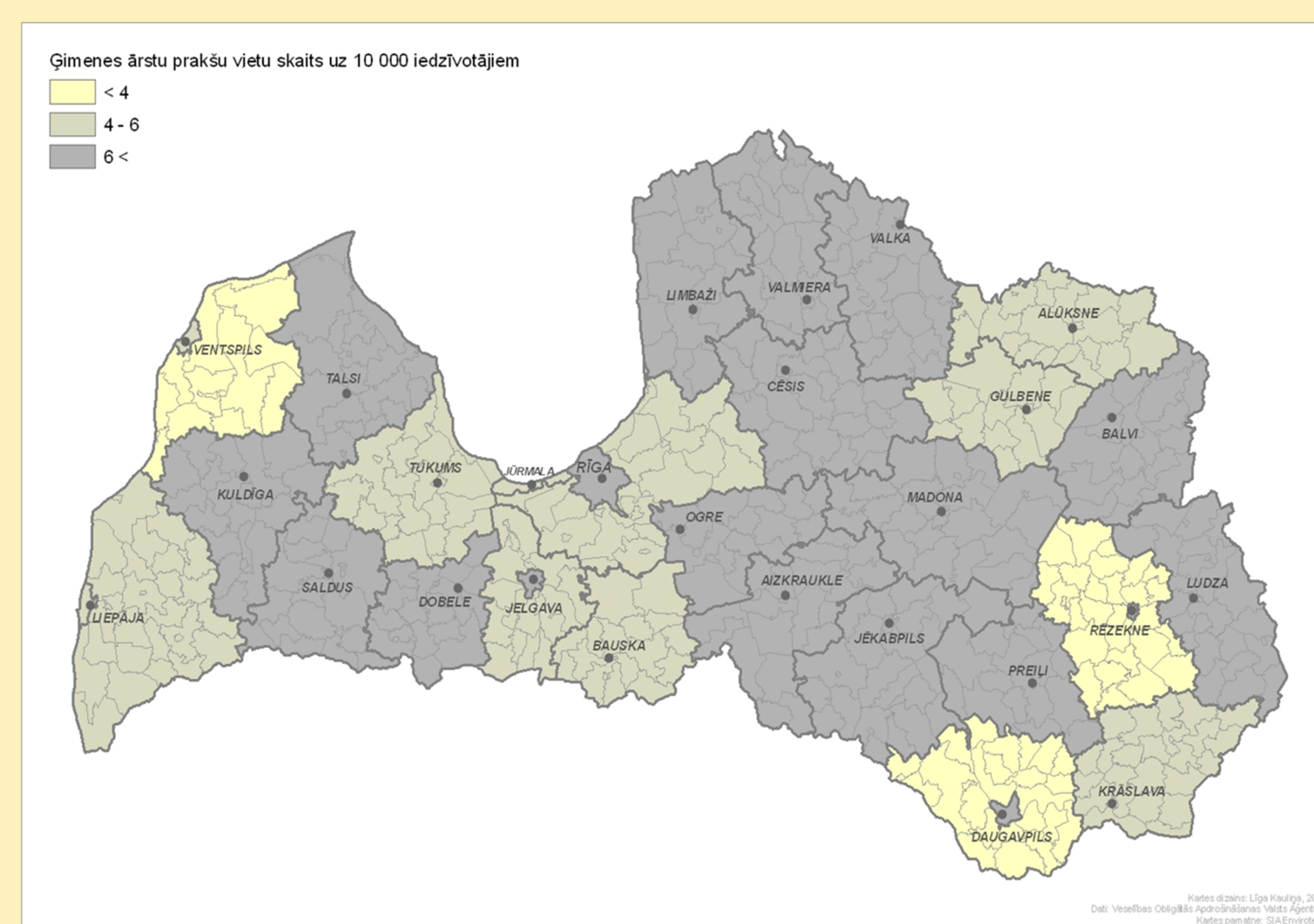
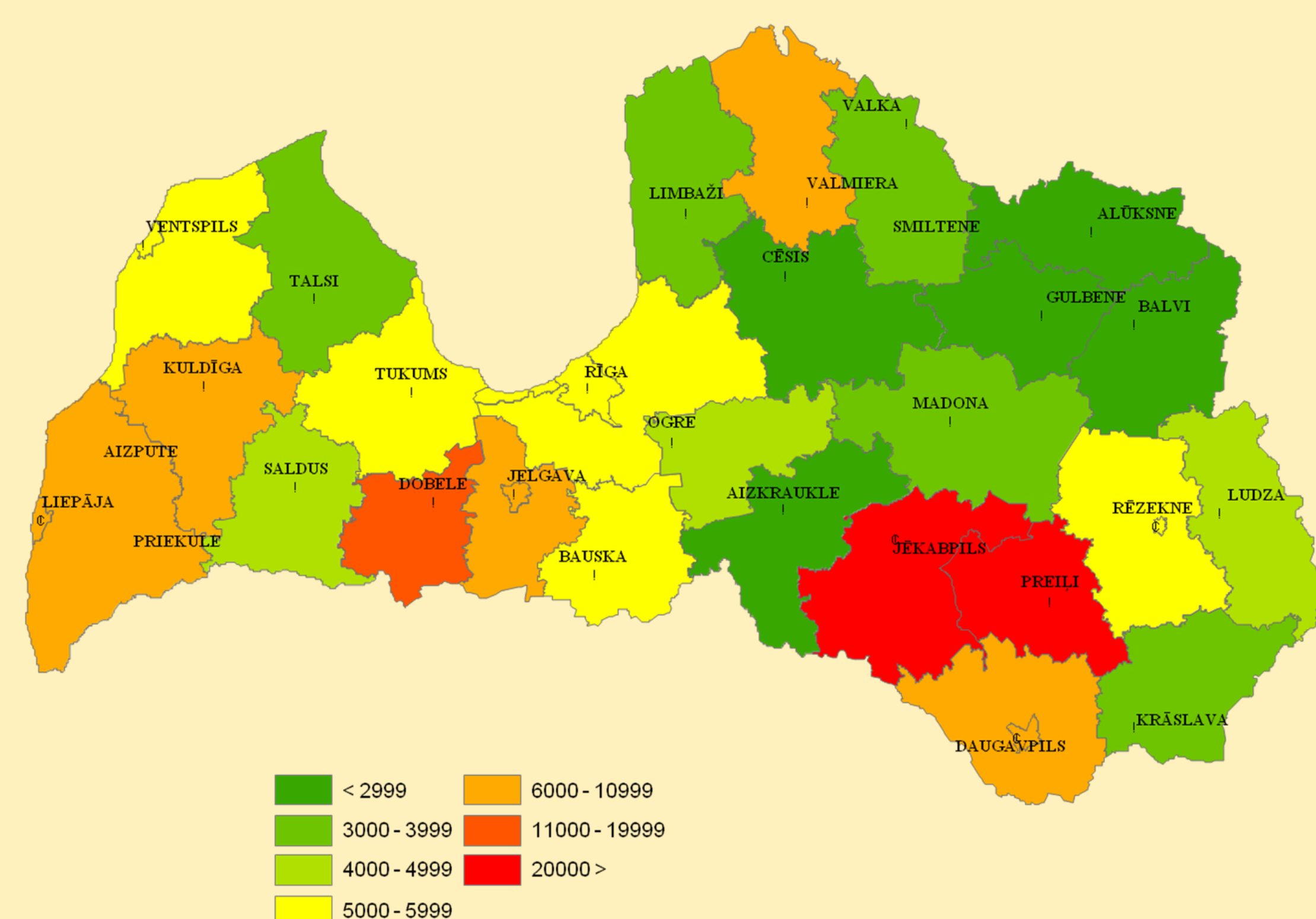


Figure 2 Number of inhabitants per community pharmacy in Latvia regions (excluding cities)



5 Conclusion

In author's opinion the supplementary prescribing rights for pharmacists is the great opportunity for strengthening of the role of community pharmacists in the primary health care team work and improving the treatment management process for chronic diseases patients.