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A European psychopharmacology curriculum: The young psychiatrist's point of view

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It goes without saying that psychopharmacologic treatment requires extensive knowledge of topics ranging from pharmacodynamics and efficacy, to pharmacokinetics, side-effects, and toxicity. Knowledge should be supplemented with experience regarding applicability in a clinical setting. It is well accepted that comprehensive psychopharmacologic education is essential to convey necessary knowledge and adequately prepare trainees for independent practice [1]. Currently, a psychopharmacologic curriculum, under the umbrella of the European Psychiatric Association, is in preparation in order to emphasize the importance of psychopharmacologic education in the context of psychiatric training and to foster standardization within the European Union. The aim of this presentation is to discuss psychopharmacologic education and prerequisites for an effective curriculum from the trainee's point of view. We will address challenges facing psychiatric trainees [2] and review existing curricula as well as literature in which they are evaluated. Based on evaluation of the model curriculum by the American Society of Clinical Psychopharmacology, one of the most broadly used psychopharmacologic curricula, it has been emphasized that an effective curriculum should be more than a list of topics. It should also convey pedagogic strategies with a focus on up-to-date technology, and provide a process through which teacher and trainee progress can be assessed [3,4]. Reflection on currently available curricula should aid in the development of an effective and timely EU-wide psychopharmacologic curriculum.

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How to overcome the negative image of psychiatry: Facts and fiction

W23

Are psychiatrists an endangered species?

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Introduction Recruitment of young doctors into psychiatry is declining in many countries, which might become a threat to the survival of the profession.

Objectives To identify potential reasons for this threat.

Aims To look at psychiatry with concepts used by the sociology of professions.

Methods Professions are characterized – and these concept will be used for analysis here – by (1) ownership of a specialized body of knowledge and skills, which defines the field of competence and the scope of potential clients, including the demarcation from other professions; (2) holding a high status in society; (3) being granted autonomy by society, e.g. in recruiting and excluding members; and (4) being obliged, in return for the above, to guarantee high quality standards in providing services and following ethical rules.

Results Six intertwined areas of concern are identified: three of them, the increasing criticism by users and carers, the intrusion of other professions, and psychiatry's negative image in society, can be traced back to problems with the other three concerning the “ownership of a specialized body of knowledge and skills”. With the preparation and advent of DSM-5, discussions about the lack of validity of psychiatric disease entities have gone viral in the time of the internet. The attempts to “carve nature at its joints” have failed, and this is more and more perceived from outside, threatening psychiatry's status in society and potentially turning away to be psychiatrists.

Conclusion Looking at psychiatry as a profession may help to better understand its current situation.

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The negative image psychiatry from a sociological perspective

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The negative image of psychiatry is not only due to unfavourable communication with the media, but is basically a problem of self-conceptualization. It results both from unjustified prejudices of the general public, mass media and health care professionals and of own unfavourable coping with external and internal concerns.

Issues related to negative stereotypes of psychiatry include overestimation of coercion, associative stigma, lack of public knowledge, need of simplification of complex mental issues, problem of the continuum between normality and psychopathology, competition with medical and non-medical disciplines, and psychopharmacological treatment.

Issues related to psychiatry's own contribution to being underestimated include lack of a clear professional identity, lack of biomarkers supporting clinical diagnoses, limited consensus about best treatment options, lack of collaboration with other medical disciplines and low recruitment rates among medical students.

Much can be improved to achieve a positive self-concept, however, psychiatry will remain a profession with an exceptional position among the medical disciplines which should be seen as its specific strength.

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