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PSYCHIATRIC TRAINING IN EUROPE: THE OPINIONS OF EARLY CAREER PSYCHIATRISTS

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Introduction: The recent reforms of mental health legislation occurred in most European countries, together with the continuous advances of technologies and the development of research in all the domains of psychiatry have deeply modified the role of mental health professionals with consequent changes in training needs for early career psychiatrists. The competencies required to psychiatrists today include not only the knowledge of the advances in neuroscience, psychopharmacology, psychotherapy and social psychiatry, but also the ability to understand the different clinical and social needs of the patients. Young psychiatrists report a gap between their knowledge and the skills required during the first years of their job.

Aims: The European Psychiatric Association-Early Career Psychiatrists Committee, in cooperation with the European Federation of Psychiatric Trainees, conducted a survey among European young psychiatrists and psychiatric trainees, aimed at evaluating difficulties and perspectives related to psychiatric training residency.

Methods: 86 respondents completed the Psychiatric Training Questionnaire, a multiple-choice and self-reported questionnaire, which evaluates: 1) satisfaction with training received; 2) self-confidence in theoretical and practical skills included in psychiatric training curriculum; 3) educational opportunities received during training.

Results: Respondents were almost equally split between trainees (54%) and young psychiatrists (46%). Seventy per cent of them were completely or partially satisfied with training received. Early Career Psychiatrists reported higher levels of self-confidence in clinical psychiatry (98%), psychopharmacology (69%) and emergency psychiatry (61%), whereas the most problematic areas were forensic psychiatry (64%) psychotherapy (61%) and child and adolescent psychiatry (57%). 41% of respondents was not assigned a tutor for clinical activities, 73% of them could not rely on a dedicated supervisor for training in psychotherapy and 58% had not the possibility to use a log-book to record the competencies acquired during training. Only 37% participated in exchange programs; all early career psychiatrists who had this opportunity found this experience very useful for their professional growth.

Conclusions: Standards of training in psychiatry in Europe are generally satisfactory. However, our results highlight the need to:

- 1) upgrade training in some areas, such as psychotherapy, forensic psychiatry and child and adolescent psychiatry;
- 2) guarantee an adequate clinical supervision;
- 3) spread the use of log-book;
- 4) improve the opportunities for exchange programs.