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WHAT ARE THE PREREQUISITES FOR GOOD CLINICAL PRACTICE IN EUROPE?

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Good Medical Practice and Good Psychiatric Practice are key documents in the UK, indicating characteristics of a good doctor and a good psychiatrist respectively. Individual aspects of what constitutes a professional can be seen in relationship with other disciplines, team members and stakeholders. A key task of any organisation that purports to speak for the profession is to identify what these qualities are, how they are to be inculcated and developed. The Royal College of Psychiatrists, therefore, is in a unique position to do this and take it forward without guilt and shame. Leadership, teams, education, appraisals, careers and research are themes which have to be looked at. For any leadership to be successful it must have vision, strategic thinking, motivation and trust, all of which are being challenged at present. The profession of psychiatry must move from nostalgic professionalism to 'new' professionalism. We as psychiatrists must ascertain our civic and fiduciary responsibilities by identifying and agreeing standards of quality of care, altruism and values of the profession identified by us and worked at with other stakeholders. The primacy of patient welfare and advocacy for our patients is critical. For our medical-moral interdependence we must be honest with ourselves as to what our strengths and weaknesses are, but also with society to declare what we can deliver in reality and what our aspirations are. Courses in ethics, humanities and human values (medical history, social sciences, literature and films) can sensitize the clinician by raising awareness and developing critical reflection.