

Article: 0676

Topic: EPW04 - e-Poster Walk Session 04: Philosophy and Psychiatry, Sexual Disorders, Sexual Medicine and Mental Health, TeleMental Health, Classification, Guidelines/Guidance, Quality Management, Other

Training in Psychopathology in Europe: Results From a Survey

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Introduction: Recently the need for modern psychiatrists to have strong psychopathological bases has been repeatedly affirmed.

Objectives: To provide a general overview on the current status of training and practice in psychopathology across Europe.

Aims: 1) to describe the current status of training on psychopathology; 2) to identify the unmet needs of European residents in psychiatry; 3) to suggest future perspectives of training in psychopathology.

Methods: An online survey, promoted by the EPA Section on Philosophy and Psychiatry, was carried out during the period July-December 2013. Forty-one representatives of early career psychiatrists of their national associations were invited to participate. Each respondent was asked to provide the collective feedback of the association rather than that of any of its individual officer or member.

Results: Thirty-two associations returned the questionnaire out of the 41 contacted (response rate: 78%). All respondents recognize psychopathology as a core component of training in psychiatry. The primary aims of psychopathology are to assess psychiatric symptoms, to understand patients' abnormal experiences, and to make nosographical diagnoses. A formal training course in psychopathology is available in almost all surveyed countries. In most countries: 1) there is not a defined number of hours dedicated to psychopathology; 2) teaching is mainly theoretical; 3) a structured training on psychopathological rating scales is missing. At the end of the training, about half of respondents is not satisfied with received training in psychopathology.

Conclusions: European early career psychiatrists clearly recognize the need to rediscover psychopathology, which represents the heritage of European Psychiatry. Initiatives to improve training and practice of psychopathology should be addressed by national and international psychiatric organizations.