

Competency-based training elsewhere in Europe

The overall emphasis in postgraduate psychiatric training in Western Europe is shifting towards a competency-based model. Other countries, including Sweden and Denmark, are also developing their systems of training and assessment. Close collaboration between the various national systems will enhance the quality and validity of all the new competency-based models. This should be promoted not only bilaterally but also multilaterally, through international organisations such as Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes (UEMS) and the European Federation for all Psychiatric Trainees (EFPT). Both these organisations are already actively discussing competency-based training.

Conclusion

Competency-based training, once properly implemented, will allow a doctor's performance in the workplace to be reliably assessed. As this new model of training is implemented, the assessment tools need to be carefully evaluated and

improved. It is hoped that competency-based training will lead to enhanced standards in postgraduate medical education, resulting in better training for trainees and better care for patients. The experiences of trainees in the Netherlands and the UK will be useful for trainees in other parts of Europe as competency-based training is implemented there.

References

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NEWS AND NOTES

For contributions to the 'News and notes' column, please email ip@rcpsych.ac.uk

Reduced membership rates

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has reduced its annual subscription rates to £30 for members working in countries classed as B and C or D according to the World Bank criteria if their monthly income in 2008 is below £1000. Further details are available from the College Membership Office.

Bursary for psychiatrists from low-income countries

The College's Faculty of the Psychiatry of Old Age has a bursary for psychiatrists practising in low-income countries in the field of mental health in older people, to attend the annual residential meeting in Barcelona on 5–6 March 2009. Further information is available from kkottasz@rcpsych.ac.uk.

Specialist Associateship

In July 2008 the College launched a new grade of membership, Specialist Associateship, open to registered specialists who qualified abroad but who currently work in the UK. Further information is available from latkinson@rcpsych.ac.uk.

The launch of BACAMH

The Bangladesh Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (BACAMH) was launched in May 2008. Its mission is to promote the mental health of children, adolescents and their families through training, research, prevention and collaboration. See the Association's website, <http://www.bacamh.99homepages.com>.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence should be sent to: Amit Malik MRCPsych, Consultant Psychiatrist, Hampshire Partnership NHS Trust, UK, email ip@rcpsych.ac.uk

A visit to Iraqi Kurdistan

Sir: The Iraq Subcommittee (ISC) of the Board of International Affairs organised a visit to Iraqi Kurdistan to help support mental health services within the province. Four members of the Subcommittee took part in the visit, on 8–15 June 2007. Our official meetings started on the day of our arrival. We met with the dean of Hawler Medical

School, the president of Hawler Medical University and the dean of Hawler Nursing School, as well as the Minister of Health and the Minister of Higher Education (Hawler is the Kurdish name for Erbil, capital of the province). We also visited the mental health unit in Hawler Hospital and met with the consultants, psychiatric trainees and other staff. We also visited a newly commissioned long-stay psychiatric facility.