

Editorial

Taking concrete action to prioritise trainee well-being: The role of the European Federation of Psychiatric Trainees

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At a time when mental health is attracting increasing public attention, the question of the psychiatrist's place in the complex landscape of mental health issues is particularly acute.¹ The mental health of caregivers and doctors has become an essential issue in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The work constraints imposed on healthcare professionals during this period led to an increase in symptoms such as depression, suicidal ideation and anxiety.² How can the health of healthcare professionals be maintained in a context of crisis, but also in its aftermath? Among the professionals uniquely positioned to meet these demands, psychiatrists and psychotherapists may question their role. The role of the psychiatrist in the mental health of professionals is being examined, and this concerns psychiatric trainees.

Yet, within the realm of psychiatry, a legitimate concern has surfaced: how to address the escalating demand for care, advice, and management in the expansive field of mental health while ensuring access to care for patients grappling with psychiatric disorders. For example, in France, numerous psychiatrists have voiced reservations about burdening psychiatrists exclusively with all mental health issues.³ The workload involved in assigning mental health issues exclusively to psychiatrists brings psychiatrists face-to-face with the workload they already have. In many countries, the issue of recruiting psychiatrists in training and retaining them in the profession is a major one.⁴⁻⁶ Indeed, it seems that mental health issues are important to deal with on a societal level without solely relying on a single dedicated profession.³

Nevertheless, a pivotal domain where mental health becomes unavoidable for psychiatrists, especially those in training, is their mental well-being. An increasing number of psychiatrists and trainees are apprehensive about long-term practice in a hospital environment.⁷ As a result, many aspire to work in private practice to exert more control over their working conditions, driven by the fear of burnout. This year, discussions among trainee representatives at the national and European level led to a consensus on the imperative to contemplate this issue and institute healthier working practices.⁸ Consequently, a dynamic European Working Group centred on this matter has been established within the European Federation of Psychiatric Trainees (EFPT).

The objective of this EFPT Mental Health Working Group is to offer psychiatric trainees scientific resources on understanding mental health for the general population, medical students, psychiatrists, and psychiatric trainees. In addition to bringing together mental health initiatives run by trainees, this group aims to provide keys to understanding the psychosocial risks increased in psychiatry as a profession.

By pursuing this work on mental health, the psychiatric trainees show their investment in this field, their desire for training, and problem-solving. Seeing this as a cross-cutting issue in society, trainees should remain proactive in tackling mental health teaching, analysing the implications of psychiatrists' work on mental health, and mobilising resources to enable trainees to be as mentally healthy as possible.



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