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PROPOSALS FOR A NEW IDENTITY OF YOUNG PSYCHIATRISTS IN EUROPE

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The professional identity of psychiatrists is recently generating controversies and uncertainty, which are reflected in psychiatric education and training throughout Europe.

In Europe, the organization of psychiatric education and training mostly depends on the range of mental health services available at individual sites. It has been recently proposed residents to rotate compulsory in different settings, such as hospital wards, outpatient clinics and community services, in order to learn how to provide different interventions for the different mental disorders. Moreover, while young psychiatrists are skilled in several pharmacological and psychosocial interventions to be provided in the community, they seem to be less experienced in providing these interventions within an hospital framework. The need for “balancing” community- and hospital-based mental health care needs to be specifically addressed during psychiatric training.

The shortage of funds for research projects is one of the major challenges for young researchers. In most European countries, it is becoming more and more difficult to have access to independent funds. National and international networks, as well as exchange programmes involving residents and young researchers, should be promoted.

Finally, it has been documented that residents in psychiatry are at a high-risk of “professional isolation”, which may contribute to the development of burn-out symptoms, particularly frequent among young colleagues.

Difficulties faced by young psychiatrists in the above-mentioned domains of psychiatry are illustrated and possible solutions discussed on the basis of recent results from European research networks involving young psychiatrists.