Competency-based training schemes in psychiatry

Sir:

At its 2006 annual forum in Riga, the European Federation for Psychiatric Trainees (EFPT) issued its first statement on competency-based training and assessment in psychiatry. The EFPT, which represents national associations of psychiatric trainees from across Europe, is broadly in favour of competency-based training if it improves the standard of psychiatric education and is not overly bureaucratic.

Competency-based training schemes in psychiatry are currently being introduced in Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, and there are plans for similar changes to training in a number of other European countries. The EFPT believes there are significant opportunities for cross-European collaboration and mutual learning between the countries introducing these changes. The EFPT also very warmly welcomes the decision of the Board of Psychiatry of the Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes (UEMS) to set up a working group to look at common competencies in psychiatry required within the European Union (EU), based on the UEMS document ‘A profile of a psychiatrist’.

We, as European trainees, believe that well designed, properly funded and wisely implemented reforms that have the potential to improve training will also improve the mental health of Europe. The fact that many EU countries are taking a similar approach and implementing changes at the same time also provides a unique opportunity to agree some common standards, to share and develop common assessment tools, and to strengthen the specialty. The adoption of more similar approaches in training and assessment may also facilitate greater cross-EU collaboration and exchange, for example making it far easier for a trainee from one country to spend a period of training in another country if the competencies and means of assessing them are similar.

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