

The Action Plan 2010 of the WPA Early Career Psychiatrists Council

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The commitment of the WPA leadership toward early career psychiatrists was clear from the beginning of this triennium. In fact, the fourth institutional goal of the WPA Action Plan 2008-2011 was "to promote the professional development of early career psychiatrists worldwide" (1). A series of initiatives was defined by the President, Prof. Mario Maj, to pursue this goal: a) launching, in collaboration with a network of centers of excellence, a programme of one-year fellowships for young psychiatrists from low-income countries, who will commit themselves to apply in their country of origin what they have learnt; b) organizing a series of workshops on leadership and professional skills for young psychiatrists; c) facilitating the participation of young psychiatrists in WPA congresses and other scientific meetings; d) stimulating the participation of young psychiatrists in the activities of WPA Scientific Sections; e) joining and assisting Member Societies in the development and implementation of programmes for young psychiatrists (1). A further initiative was to create an Early Career Psychiatrists Council, which should collaborate with the President and the Executive Committee to pursue the above-mentioned goals.

The members of the WPA Early Career Psychiatrists Council have been appointed by WPA Member Societies and subdivided into the following five geographic areas: Europe I, which includes Northern, Southern and Western Europe; Europe II, which includes Central and Eastern Europe; Asia/Australasia; Africa and Middle East; Americas.

The Early Career Psychiatrists Council has actively started its work. The first activity of the Council was to elect a coordinator for each of the five geographic areas. Andrea Fiorillo from Italy has

been elected for Europe I, Zuzana Lattova from Czech Republic for Europe II, Prachi Brahmhatt from Australia for Asia/Australasia, Hussien El Kholy from Egypt for Africa and Middle East, and Felipe Picon from Brazil for Americas.

On December 18, 2009 the five coordinators had a teleconference with the WPA President in order to discuss and finalize the Action Plan of the Council, taking into account the several interesting ideas which emerged during the five teleconferences that the WPA President had with the members of each area in October 2009.

According to the WPA normative instruments, the Early Career Psychiatrists Council is expected to: a) upgrade communication concerning early career psychiatrists between WPA Member Societies and WPA governance; b) identify and address problems concerning early career psychiatrists; c) promote the participation of early career psychiatrists in the various sectorial activities of the WPA; d) contribute to the design of activities to promote the professional development of early career psychiatrists.

In this paper we will briefly describe the Action Plan for 2010 of the WPA Early Career Psychiatrists Council, which consists of the following nine activities.

WPA website

The Early Career Psychiatrists Council will develop its own section in the WPA website. The five area coordinators will interact with the other Council members and will agree about the contents to be posted in this section of the website. One of the five area coordinators will be responsible for the website and will actively interact with the WPA Secretariat.

WPA News

The Early Career Psychiatrists Council will have at its disposal up to two pages

in each issue of WPA News, which is the official quarterly news bulletin of WPA. This will give the possibility to convey information about the Council activities to all Member Societies and Scientific Sections.

World Psychiatry

The Early Career Psychiatrists Council has the possibility to submit papers to the WPA official journal, in particular under the sections Mental Health Policy Papers and WPA News. Collaboration activities already started among the members of the Council in order to produce good quality papers for the journal.

Papers/documents on psychiatric education and other issues

All members of the Council agreed upon the importance to produce papers and/or documents on psychiatric education and issues related to early career psychiatrists' issues and activities.

Europe I and II agreed to produce a joint paper on training in psychotherapy in different European countries. Europe I will subsequently write a paper on what happens to early career psychiatrists after training, the so-called "transition phase". Europe II, Africa/Middle East and Americas will produce papers or documents on psychiatric education in their regions. The Asia/Australasia area is interested in the issue of stigmatization of people with mental disorders and of psychiatrists, and will be in contact with the WPA Section on Stigma and Mental Illness (2). Finally, Africa/Middle East will produce a paper on choosing psychiatry as a career and will consider writing a paper/document on nurses' training on mental health issues.

Participation in the WPA programme on depression in persons with physical diseases

The WPA has recently started a programme aiming to raise the awareness of the prevalence and prognostic impli-



cations of depression in persons with physical diseases (3). Three books are being produced, dealing respectively with depression and diabetes, depression and cancer, and depression and heart disease, and three corresponding sets of slides will be developed, which will be translated in several languages and posted on the WPA website. The Early Career Psychiatrists Council will contribute in the translation/adaptation of the slides in different languages.

Section for the general public of the WPA website

The Early Career Psychiatrists Council will participate in the development of a section for the general public of the WPA website. Input will be received by the WPA Secretary General and the WPA Secretary for Education.

Participation in WPA scientific meetings

In the years 2010 and 2011, the Early Career Psychiatrists Council will contribute to the WPA Regional and International Meetings, in particular those taking place in St. Petersburg in June 2010, in Cairo in January 2011, and in Beijing in September 2010.

The Council will actively contribute to the 15th World Congress of Psychiatrists, which will take place in Buenos Aires in September 2011, with proposals of symposia and workshops. An Assembly of the Council will also be organized on that occasion.

Participation in WPA Scientific Sections

Council members and all early career psychiatrists are welcome to join the WPA Scientific Sections. The Council

will probably have an official representative in one or more Sections.

WPA fellowships, research projects, train-the-trainers workshops

All early career psychiatrists are welcome to apply for WPA fellowships and for participation in WPA train-the-trainers workshops, and to submit research projects to the WPA for financial support. More information on this subject can be found on the WPA website.

References

1. Maj M. The WPA Action Plan 2008-2011. *World Psychiatry* 2008;7:129-30.
2. Stuart H. Fighting the stigma caused by mental disorders: past perspectives, present activities, and future directions. *World Psychiatry* 2008;7:185-8.
3. Maj M. The WPA Action Plan is in progress. *World Psychiatry* 2009;8:65-6.

