

LETTERS

Is there any room for General Practice in Greece? A proposal to scientific and academic stakeholders

Dear Editor,

General Practice (GP) is at the centre of interest for the current health care policy reform for certain reasons but mainly as a result of the financial crisis and government cost-containment measures. However, although many efforts have been focused in order for this discipline to receive the European and national position that it deserves, there is still large room for improvement.

GP in Greece is still searching for a central role in coordinating and guiding primary health care (PHC) that is still fragmented without integration and coordination¹. Clinical tools and guidance are in general lacking, and only this year a national project coordinated by the University of Crete with the joint cooperation of the Greek Society of GP (ELEGEIA, <http://www.elegeia.gr/>) led to consensus for the first practice guidelines for use in PHC. The very low performance of Greece has been reported when quality and performance in PHC was mapped by European comparative studies². Research is still isolated in a few academic centres, while the academic discipline is still looking for recognition. Practice-based research and networking is still restricted in the activities mostly carried out in one region of Greece, although a theoretical framework has been discussed a couple of years ago³.

Major themes with clinical relevance and impact on quality of health care services including the economic crisis and its impact on health are the following: multimorbidity and frailty, self-management and home care, patient-centeredness with a focus on doctor-patient communication and compassion in health care are almost neglected in the current agenda of the discipline in Greece.

Therefore, there is still need and interest for GP to be further supported in Greece and apart of the ELEGEIA, the official society that represents the GPs in the global and European association (WONCA), there are also several efforts that they coordinated and undertook by the Greek College of GPs (<http://www.collegegp.gr/>) and the Hellenic Society for Research and Education in PHC (<http://www.primarycare.gr/>). Although, the plethora of activities that have been commenced by all societies and institutes, there is a lack of coordination and interoperability leaving GP in Greece with a weak voice during health care reforms, without a strategic plan for improvement and continuous professional development and as well as a clear European perspective.

The purpose of this letter is to act as a proposal to all key scientific and academic stakeholders of GP in Greece for the formation of a Forum for GP that could raise the key and urgent issues of the discipline within a difficult period.

References

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Conflict of interest

None.

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