

conference in Helsinki, 12–15 January 2005, which was open to 52 European member states and professional and non-governmental organisations. The preparatory work for this meeting began in 2003 in Copenhagen and was developed in the course of regular meetings (Athens, Brussels, Paris, Moscow and, more recently, Luxemburg and Tallin). The final documents of the conference contain an analysis of the current state of European psychiatry and some suggestions on how to improve treatment efficacy and efficiency, how to increase service quality and accessibility, and how to overcome stigma and protect human rights (World Health Organization, 2005).

Future challenges: research and training

A fundamental challenge in the future of child psychiatry is further research, particularly into:

- the aetiology and pathogenesis of psychopathological disorders in children and adolescents
- symptoms and disorders, stability and change
- externalising and internalising disorders
- developmental disorders
- evidence-based treatments and interventions, as well as preventive strategies (involving also the family and the more extended environment).

Another challenge concerns the training of young child psychiatrists and researchers. ESCAP, in collaboration with Foundation Child and the International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the IACAPAP, has organised a research seminar in Italy every year over the last 5 years, which gathers leading professionals in child and adult psychiatry from all over the world. The research seminar is open to 35–40 young European child psychiatry students, sponsored by

Foundation Child, to spend a week of study in order to be trained in a particular area, which changes every year (mood and anxiety disorders, treatment evaluation, etc.). In addition, every student is invited to present to the group his/her past or current research projects in order to get useful feedback from colleagues and senior supervisors. The next one is to be held from 10 to 15 April 2005 in Bocca di Magra (La Spezia).

For such scientific activities, for facilitating a continuous exchange of scientific knowledge and developing a common system of training, European child psychiatry needs to be supported by adequate funds and structures.

Scientific communication, both intra- and inter-disciplinary, should also be facilitated through the creation of international research projects, scientific meetings and scientific publications. Since knowledge in the field of child and adolescent mental health is constantly evolving, regular professional updating is necessary.

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The College website (www.rcpsych.ac.uk) has seen useful changes, so that links with the Board of International Affairs, *International Psychiatry* and international mental health organisations are much more accessible. Suggestions for further improvements are welcome. Contact jcarroll@rcpsych.ac.uk

NEWS, NOTES, FORTHCOMING INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

News and notes

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International programme for the College Annual Meeting in Edinburgh

The Board of International Affairs has organised a stimulating programme within the College Annual Meeting in Edinburgh this year. The highlight will be the visit of the President of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), Professor Okasha, who will be involved in a major discussion on Wednesday 22 June on 'The recruitment and migration of psychiatrists from developing countries: an ethical issue and a conflict between social responsibility and individual freedom of choice'. Some of the new

international divisions are organising a day-long programme for Thursday 23 June. The themes will centre on the diversity of issues in psychiatry in different cultures and settings, and implications for training.

The European Task Force and progress in the evaluation of CME in Europe

The European Task Force – comprising official representatives of the Association of European Psychiatrists, the Section and Board of the Psychiatry subsection of the

Union of European Medical Specialists (UEMS), the WPA and the WHO Mental Health Regional Office for Europe – have agreed with the Secretary-General of the UEMS (Dr Bernard Mailet) that the Task Force should be the technical arm of the system for European accreditation of psychiatry where international accreditation is required. This agreement has been ratified by each of the organisations involved. This will therefore replace the current chaotic situation whereby there are several European accrediting bodies without common standards. The Task Force is currently developing procedures and standards.

Leaders of European psychiatry

The leaders of European psychiatry continued their series of meetings during the WPA International Congress in Florence in November 2004. Earlier in the year they had reached consensus on psychiatric services focused on the community (see News and notes in the January 2005 issue of *International Psychiatry*, no. 7) and in Florence they discussed expert presentations on the optimal range of mental health services in different settings according to the income level of the setting and the important question of how to evaluate mental health services. There was also a presentation on the system of continuing medical education mentioned above.

The afternoon was devoted to discussion of the Helsinki WHO Ministerial Conference on Mental Health that took place in January 2005 and discussion of key items that were anticipated to emerge in declarations from the Helsinki conference.

Plans have been agreed for the leaders meeting that will take place during the meeting of the Association of European Psychiatrists (AEP) in Munich in April. This will focus on the effectiveness of psychiatric organisations. Leaders will use the declarations that emerge from the Helsinki meeting to discuss how psychiatric organisations can use them to benefit the practice of psychiatry.

Specialist registrars and VSO

An opportunity exists for a specialist registrar to take up a placement with Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) that would be approved for the Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST). It would be based at Batticaloa Teaching Hospital on the East Coast of Sri Lanka. For further details contact jcarroll@rcpsych.ac.uk.

Humanitarian fund

The Department of Health (DH), the British Medical Association (BMA) and the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) recognise that many National Health Service staff undertake humanitarian work overseas. In the last 2 years the DH has made available a fund to cover the incidental expenses of teams undertaking humanitarian projects. It has worked with the BMA International Committee and the RCN to allocate these funds. If you wish to be informed of funds for future years contact internationalinfo@bma.org.uk.

'No care for most young people with mental illness'

The WHO has issued a press release that expresses concern that some two million young people in the European region suffer from mental disorders and that most of them receive no care or treatment. The degree of coverage and quality of services for the young, including for serious disorders, are generally worse than those for adults. See www.euro.who.int/mentalhealth/ChildAdolescent/20040920_1.

Middle East Division regional meeting

The 6th regional meeting of the College in the Middle East was held on 3–4 October 2004 in Cairo, Egypt. The theme of the meeting was 'Developing psychiatric manpower – a global view', and it included topics on the current manpower situation in the region, with a focus on the psychiatric scene in Iraq, the integration of psychiatric services into primary care in Egypt, international perspectives on mental health services and the role of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), as well as the development of manpower in the area of substance misuse and other general training issues.

A session was also dedicated to the topic of art and its role in psychiatric services in Egypt, and there was a free-paper session that included papers from the UK on the pathology of rare musical hallucinations, mental health literacy among women in Egypt, and dual-diagnosis research in the UK. Other topics included the presentation and management of anxiety disorders in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, services for the elderly in developing countries, the challenges of practising psychotherapy in the Middle Eastern culture, as well as a session on the status of sleep medicine in the region.

The meeting was attended by mental health professionals from Egypt, the UK, the USA, Iraq, the Gulf states and Lebanon. The College was represented by Dr Mike Shooter, Professor Hamid Ghodse and Mrs Vanessa Cameron.

To all those attending the opening session, Professor Ahmed Okasha from Egypt, as President of the WPA, extended an invitation to the WPA meeting due to be held in Egypt in September 2005.

During the business meeting, Dr Nasser Loza from Egypt was elected as chairman of the Middle East Division, Dr Fouad Antun from Lebanon as secretary and Dr Walid Sarhan from Jordan as financial officer.

World Psychiatry

World Psychiatry has become very well established as the official journal of the World Psychiatric Organisation. It is published three times a year and is distributed without cost to psychiatrists whose names are provided by WPA member organisations (the editor can be contacted at majmario@tin.it). It is also easily accessible from the WPA website, www.wpanet.org.

Arabic-speaking psychiatrists are reminded of the electronic journal for psychiatrists and psychologists, which has a wide range of scientific and professional material. There are also English- and French-language versions. See www.arabpsynet.com.