

European Association for Physician Health Conference

“Doctor’s resilience. Building European networks through research and practice”

Barcelona 20th and 21st April

The current health care systems are very demanding for working professionals. The heavy workload, the lack of individual and team autonomy when organizing work, constant users’ demands and the continual need to be up-to-date about scientific knowledge, all which create tension, that is very difficult to handle day by day without suffering physical and/or mental problems.

Resilience is the human capacity to adapt and overcome extreme situations with flexibility, get and even come away strengthened.

The EAPH biannual conference in 2015 held in Barcelona was dedicated to doctor’s resilience by building European networks through research and practice.

CONCLUSIONS

- A. Medical students as well as Resident Doctors are high risk groups who will be future health care professionals and for this reason we have to be aware of these issues:
1. It’s very important that we are able to offer emotional support to those in need in order to avoid future suffering from psychopathologies with more frequency.
 2. It’s recommended that universities introduce urgent changes in the curriculum, incorporating contents in relation to the emotional and ethical aspects, beyond the purely technical aspects, such as relation skills and doctor-patient communication. Training in doctor-patient communication and emotional management are important to reduce burn-out and improve resilience.
 3. It’s also necessary to give more importance to a Hidden Curriculum (informal training) about the positive and negative models of the medical culture in general.
 4. It’s strongly recommended that the universities and health care centres offer extracurricular activities. It’s been demonstrated that students and residents who practice more physical activities have a healthier lifestyle and better mental health.
 5. Psychosocial support, healthy social activities, tutors and intellectual stimulation are protective factors against stress which help resilience. It’s also necessary to have flexible class attendance, to promote peer mentors who help prioritize and organize students and offer psychological assistance.

B. The economical crisis is affecting the health system budgets. The difficult economical situation of the patients and the work conditions and salaries of the health professionals affect their resilience. Within this framework, it has been concluded that the health care system and institutions must increase the resilience of their professionals:

1. Health care organizations have to help their professionals by offering preventive programs against burnout. "Healthy doctors have healthy patients" was one of the issues of the Conference.
2. Many studies in Europe have proven the existence of risk and protective factors. Health care organizations must keep these factors in mind at all times to help health professionals to build their own resilience and develop a healthier practice.
3. Studies have shown that training in communication and emotional management increase resilience. For example, learning about motivational interview techniques improves the empathy of the health care professionals and reduces the risk of suffering burn-out related to the work.
4. Working on personal self-esteem improves resilience and reduces stress and the fear to take decisions making them more efficient and with less errors.
5. The family doctors' role must evolve with society. It cannot be constrained only to technical or organizational themes, but must be able to understand the global situation in order to work better.
6. Support programmes for stressed health professionals are being developed everywhere in order to improve their resilience and performance.
7. The occupational health services with their well-being programmes for health professionals are contributing to improve their resilience, above all for the younger doctors.
8. The most resilient professionals are more convinced of their vocation and have less regrets of their professional choice. To believe that one has made a mistake in their chosen profession appears to be related with stress and burnout at work.

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