

Prevention and mental health promotion: A need for international collaboration

Prevention and mental health promotion are key words of contemporary psychiatry. These concepts are not new and are only rediscovered now. It is widely accepted that an absence of illness is not enough. The «ευ ζην» (well being) of the ancient Greeks is additionally needed. Promotion of positive mental health is the arm by which well being can be reached.

Given the irreversible trend toward globalization and the growing complexity of our field, international collaboration will become one of main challenges for the next decade. However, development of psychiatry is different in various parts of the world, and the ability to apply preventive and mental health promotion measures will vary as a function of many factors involving economic development, professional resource availability, national priorities and the particular culture.

Nowadays, there is a wide gap between the "West" and the "East". Western cultures are occupied with human rights, political correctness, sexual harassment, new drugs development (together with enormous expansion and dictate of pharmaceutical companies), life skill education, quality of life, anti-stigma programs, etc.

On the other side, most of the Eastern countries are struggling for survival, due to extreme poverty, hunger, chronic stress, and diseases forgotten at the West. And while at the West new sophisticated technology is everyday created and used, most of the countries can rely only upon their traditional methods of healing and ad hoc diagnostics. New antipsychotic and antidepressive drugs are produced, which are safer, and with fewer side effects. But, most of the countries do not have the means to obtain even the cheapest medication for psychiatrically.

Globalization should include harmonization and assistance to poor countries. Unless these countries are being helped, psychiatry will remain an elitist discipline, satisfied with itself, and its accepted goals and intentions only sterile words and declarations, without a wider impact. In addition to that, growing terrorism and man-made disasters all over the world reveal that the "malady of death" governs the military and economic domains as well as social and political bonds. The once noble realm of the mind, a centre of science and psychiatry, is getting new characteristics nowadays. Therefore, in the prevailing trend of globalization and with a monumental crisis of the civilisation there is a need for a true international solidarity and collaboration. While natural disasters cannot be influenced, every effort should be undertaken in preventing wars and violence. The role of the scientific community is great in this domain and it should not be neglected.

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REFERENCES

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