



Report of the UEMS Section for Psychiatry

THE PROFILE OF A PSYCHIATRIST

Preamble

This position paper is prepared for, and given out, by the Union of European Medical Specialists Section of Psychiatry after consultation with national authorities in member countries, and with the European Federation of Psychiatric Trainees. The position paper is closely linked to the *Charter on Training of Medical Specialists in the EU - Requirements for the Speciality of Psychiatry* which can be accessed at: <http://www.uempsychiatry.org/board/reports/Chapter6-11.10.03.pdf>

Aims and Objectives

This report describes the necessary competences and tasks of a contemporary European psychiatrist and is aimed at other medical professionals, educators, politicians, decision makers and the general public.

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Review date

This report should be reviewed every 4 Years.

THE CONTEXT

The scientific basis of psychiatry is an integration of biological, psychological and social aspects, as it is scientifically developed, also by recent research demonstrating effect on neurobiology from psychological and social interventions and vice versa. Psychiatric medicine in Europe is rooted in the scientific, intellectual and humanistic traditions of the continent. The respect for human rights and for religious and philosophical pluralism is at its heart, as is scientific critical thought and empirical analysis.

The European psychiatrist currently practices in varied settings and diverse communities. For him/her, exercising professional standards, making ethical judgements and being aware of the need for tolerance, are all fundamental. Many practise in what have long been multi-lingual societies. Others work in societies experiencing recent and rapid cultural change as a result of immigration.

European society is complex. The relationship between the sexes, including issues of family and social relations, vary significantly within the continent. The European psychiatrist requires both an understanding of this cultural diversity and a commitment to personal equality. Europe's demography also influences psychiatric practice. The psychiatrist requires the knowledge and skills to enable him/her to address the needs of an increasingly ageing population.

Healthcare systems in Europe are also diverse. There are different levels of development and complexity. Provision varies between public and private services. The psychiatrist needs sufficient skills and knowledge to be able to work within these diverse and complex structures as an administrator and as a leader. S/he also needs the appropriate communication skills to interact with fellow health professionals, families and service users. S/he has a duty to oppose abuse of psychiatry for the purpose of excessive social control or political repression.

Since the European psychiatrist may be required to work in a variety of different countries, s/he will also be involved in the process of European harmonisation. Out of this process, a sense of common European professional identity is gradually emerging.

THE CONCEPT OF MENTAL DISORDER

In the context of this paper, we have adopted the ICD-10 definition of mental disorder. ICD-10 can be found at: <http://www.who.int/classifications/icd/en/bluebook.pdf>.

We acknowledge however that there is no single and universally accepted definition of "mental disorder". DSM-IV and ICD-10 both refer to this problem but fail to find an appropriate substitute. The term is not exact and encompasses psychological disorders of thought and emotion as well as physical disorders which also find expression in changes in behaviour, emotion and thought processes. Social deviance or conflict alone is excluded from the definition.

The following description is adapted from the CanMEDS 2000 roles issued by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. <http://rcpsc.medical.org>

PSYCHIATRIST'S COMPETENCES

1: Psychiatric Expert/Clinical Decision-Maker

Definition

Psychiatrists deal with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of patients with mental disorders. To manage this, psychiatrists possess a defined body of medical, and in particular psychopathological, knowledge and a defined set of procedural skills that are used to collect and interpret data, make appropriate clinical decisions and carry out diagnostic and therapeutic procedures using an appropriate combination of biological, psychological and sociological methods. Their care is characterised by up-to-date, ethical and cost-effective clinical practice and effective communication with patients, other health care providers and the community. The role of *psychiatric expert/clinical decision-maker* is central to the function of specialist psychiatrists, and draws on the competencies included in the roles of *communicator, psychotherapist, collaborator, health advocate, manager, scholar* and *professional*.

Competencies

The psychiatrist is able to...

1. Demonstrate diagnostic skills to investigate, describe and define, psychopathological and other clinical findings.
2. Demonstrate therapeutic skills to effectively and ethically manage the spectrum of patient care problems diagnosed. The therapeutic skills include especially:
 - 2.1. Biological treatment
 - 2.2. Psychotherapy
 - 2.3. Social psychiatric intervention
 - 2.4. The ability to integrate these treatment modalities in order to optimise treatment
(See appendix for further description of treatment competencies)
3. Access and apply relevant information and therapeutic options to clinical practice
4. Demonstrate skills in utilising the social context as a tool for rehabilitation and recovery
5. Demonstrate psychiatric expertise in situations other than in direct patient care
6. Recognise personal limits of expertise
7. Demonstrate effective consultation skills

2: Communicator

Definition

To provide humane, high-quality care, psychiatrists establish effective relationships with patients, other physicians, and other health professionals. Communication skills are essential for the functioning of a psychiatrist and are necessary for obtaining information from, and conveying information, to patients and their families. Furthermore, these abilities are critical in eliciting patients' beliefs, concerns and expectations about their illnesses and for assessing key factors impacting on patients' health.

Competencies

The psychiatrist is able to...

1. Establish a therapeutic relationship with patients
2. Elicit and synthesise relevant information from the patient, his/her family and/or community about his/her problems
3. Discuss appropriate information with the patient, his/her family, and other healthcare providers that facilitate optimal healthcare of the patient. This implies the ability to inform and counsel a patient in

a sensitive and respectful manner while fostering understanding, discussion and the patient's active participation in decisions about their care.

3: Collaborator

Definition

Psychiatrists work in partnership with others who are appropriately involved in the care of individuals or specific groups of patients. It is therefore essential for psychiatrists to be able to collaborate effectively with patients, their families or carers* and a multidisciplinary team of expert health professionals for provision of optimal patient care, education and research.

Competencies

The psychiatrist is able to...

1. Effectively consult with other physicians and healthcare professionals
2. Contribute effectively to other interdisciplinary team activities
3. Deliberately participate in shared decision making with patients and carers as appropriate
4. Effectively collaborate with patient and carer organisations

**Carer is the WHO term to describe informal (as opposed to professional) care givers such as family members, friends or others.*

4: Manager

Definition

Psychiatrists function as managers when they make everyday practice decisions involving resources, co-workers, tasks, policies and their personal lives. They do this in the settings of individual patient care, practice organisations and in the broader context of the healthcare system. Thus, psychiatrists require the abilities to prioritise and effectively execute tasks through team work with colleagues and make systematic decisions when allocating finite healthcare resources. As managers, psychiatrists take on positions of leadership within the context of professional organisations and the healthcare system.

Competencies

The psychiatrist is able to...

1. Utilise time and resources effectively in order to balance patient care, earning needs, outside activities and personal life
2. Allocate finite healthcare and health education resources effectively
3. Work effectively and efficiently in a healthcare organisation
4. Effectively utilise information technology to optimise patient care, continued self-learning and other activities

5: Health Advocate

Definition

Psychiatrists recognise the importance of advocacy activities in responding to the challenges represented by those social, environmental and biological factors that determine the mental health and well-being of patients and society. They recognise advocacy as an essential and fundamental component of mental health promotion that occurs at the level of the individual patient, the practice population and the broader community. Health advocacy is appropriately expressed both by the individual and collective responses of psychiatrists in influencing public health and policy.

Competencies

The psychiatrist is able to...

1. Identify the determinants of mental health that affect a patient, so as to be able to effectively contribute to improving individual and societal mental health
2. Recognise and respond to those issues, settings, circumstances, or situations in which advocacy on behalf of patients, professions, or society are appropriate

6: Scholar

Definition

Psychiatrists engage in a lifelong pursuit of mastery of their domain of professional expertise. They recognise the need to be continually learning and model this for others. Through their scholarly activities, they contribute to the appraisal, collection, and understanding of healthcare knowledge and facilitate the education of their students, junior colleagues, patients and others.

Competencies

The psychiatrist is able to...

1. Develop, implement and document a personal continuing education strategy
2. Apply the principles of critical appraisal to sources of medical information
3. Facilitate the learning of patients, students, residents and other health professionals
4. Contribute to research and to the development of new knowledge

7: Professional

Definition

Psychiatrists have a unique societal role as professionals with a distinct body of knowledge, skills and attitudes dedicated to improving the health and well being of others. Psychiatrists are committed to the highest standards of excellence in clinical care and ethical conduct, and to continually perfecting mastery of their discipline.

Competencies

The psychiatrist is able to...

1. Deliver the highest quality care with integrity, honesty and compassion
2. Exhibit appropriate personal and interpersonal professional behaviours
3. Practise medicine in an ethically responsible manner that respects the medical, legal and professional obligations of belonging to a self-regulating body

APPENDIX

Biological treatment

Definition

To apply biological methods in the treatment of persons with mental disorders. Biological understanding of mental disorders is essential for assessment and treatment of patients with mental disorders. Biological treatment is based on a systematic theory and on good clinical practice. It is evidence based on specific methods comprising a theory of mental and behavioural health and pathology.

Biological treatment competencies

The psychiatrist is able to...

1. Establish and maintain the treatment alliance
2. Establish a diagnosis of the mental disorder based on assessment
3. Assess which biological method is most appropriate
4. Apply and/or refer to specific biological interventions whenever appropriate
5. Evaluate outcome of biological treatment

Psychotherapy

Definition

To apply psychotherapeutic methods in the treatment of persons with mental disorders. Psychotherapeutic understanding of mental disorders is essential for assessment and treatment of patients with mental disorders. Psychotherapy is based on a systematic theory and on good clinical practice. It is evidence based on specific methods comprising a theory of mental and behavioural health and pathology.

Psychotherapy competencies

The psychiatrist is able to...

1. Establish and maintain the therapeutic alliance
2. Establish a diagnosis of the mental disorder and of personality based on psychotherapeutic assessment
3. Assess which psychotherapeutic method is most appropriate
4. Apply and/ or refer to specific psychotherapeutic interventions whenever appropriate
5. Evaluate outcome of psychotherapy

Social psychiatric intervention

Definition

To apply social interventions in the treatment of persons with mental disorders. Understanding of mental disorders in their social context is essential for assessment and treatment of patients with mental disorders. Social psychiatric interventions are based on a systematic theory, and on good clinical practice. It is evidence based on specific methods comprising a theory of mental and behavioural health and pathology.

Social psychiatric intervention competencies

The psychiatrist is able to...

1. Establish and maintain the therapeutic alliance
2. Establish a diagnosis of the social dysfunction based on assessment
3. Assess which social psychiatric intervention method is most appropriate
4. Apply and/ or refer to specific social psychiatric intervention whenever appropriate
5. Evaluate outcome of social psychiatric interventions

Integrated treatment

The psychiatrist is able to...

Plan and apply treatment, integrating assessment and knowledge of biological, psychotherapeutical and social psychiatric areas in such a way that it is experienced by the patient as coherent.