

The EPA guidance document series

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Published online: 16 February 2016
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The present issue of European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences contains a special section with four new guidance documents resulting from the Guidance Project of the European Psychiatric Association (EPA) [1, 2]. This project provides international evidence-based recommendations about current topics in mental health care, which are often neglected in the usual national or international guidelines. Since 2012, the project has published 16 EPA guidance papers in European Psychiatry, the official journal of EPA, and meanwhile, some have been implemented in European countries like in Poland. Due to technical reasons, this series of four new guidance papers is this time published in European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences [3–6]—right in time on occasion of the annual EPA Congress in Madrid, 12–15 March 2016.

The guidance papers by Martin-Carrasco and coworkers, Möller-Leimkühler and coworkers, and Brittlebank and coworkers resulted from the activities of topic-specific working groups of the EPA Council.

Martin-Carrasco et al. [3] studied the role of mental health issues in the current economic crisis in Europe. Although other topics like the refugee situation in Europe are currently getting most of the headlines, the economic crisis in Europe is far from over and long-term effects of times of austerity on mental health will still need to be considered as challenges for mental healthcare systems.

The second contribution by Gaebel et al. [4] deals with the quality of eMental health interventions in the treatment of psychotic disorders. Although most studies in the field of eMental Health have dealt with the prevention and treatment of addiction and affective disorders, people with schizophrenia may as well profit from internet-based psychoeducation and other interventions addressing the information needs of people with psychotic disorders. This guidance draws attention to an emerging research topic in eMental health research.

The third guidance paper by Möller-Leimkühler et al. [5] in this issue raises the question whether the image of psychiatry needs to be improved, and if so, which are effective means to reach this goal. Behind this lies the important question of the acceptance of mental healthcare services.

The fourth guidance document by Brittlebank et al. [6] looks at the situation of training in psychiatry in Europe. With increasing utilization of mental healthcare services, the question of workforce qualification becomes ever more important and a central aspect is the training of young psychiatrists. Not only is this important for developing a highly qualified psychiatric workforce: Providing attractive training curricula will be a major factor for recruiting and retaining young medical doctors in psychiatry.

Taken together, these guidance papers address a wide range of contemporary issues in mental health care and will hopefully be implemented with a view to ascertain and improve the quality of mental health care in Europe. The EPA is grateful to the Editors and Publishers of European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience for providing the opportunity to publish these new guidance papers so timely.

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