



Next-generation Europe: a balancing act between clinical, research and political demands

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The specialty of child and adolescent psychiatry has arisen at the interface between psychology, paediatrics and adult psychiatry. It is influenced by medical, social and legal conditions in the society. In addition, practice is governed by the political demands for an effective and quick acting health service. Our profession has grown and improved in spite of limited funding

and changing governments. Politicians who often ask for quick solutions, where there is more need for long-term planning and solid funding of prevention and treatment. .

Almost daily media news debate children's mental health. Political awareness is high—resulting in attempts to create national policies and long-term mental health plans for

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psychiatry [1, 2]—in New European Horizon possibilities for funding long-term projects [3]—and in worldwide focus on mental health in organizations such as WHO [4, 5].

Importantly, we have seen considerable positive developments within child and adolescent psychiatry over the last decades. It is now less taboo to be referred to our specialty, and we now identify, diagnose, and treat a larger proportion of the children and adolescents who struggle with a mental disorder. The systematic use of validated psychometric instruments during assessments has improved, and we are more actively incorporating the patients' and families' wishes and perspectives, when recommending treatments. Research within our specialty has increased tremendously, and we now have better evidence-based treatments (both pharmacological and non-pharmacological), more knowledge on the strong heritability of neurodevelopmental disorders, on environmental risk factors, on their neuro-cognitive underpinnings, on the associations with general medical conditions (e.g. immunological, cardiovascular, metabolic, and neurological disorders), long-term prognosis into adulthood (social, educational, and psychiatric outcomes), and the increased risk of premature death children and adolescents with a mental disorder are facing.

There is an urgent need for continuing this positive development. Europe is burdened by a war where military forces explicitly target civilians, hurting children and damaging their development for years to come. Deliberately creating anxiety, depression and PTSD victims. Europe also struggles with children living in refugee camps for most of their childhood, and with children who have been traumatized during flight and children having to integrate into new cultures.

Children and adolescents experience the consequences of climate change and the fear of their future being taken

away from them. Powerlessness is a damaging feeling, and it must be replaced by hope and action. In addition, it must be done soon.

Joint forces through professional associations such as the European Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (ESCAP), continued collaborations across scientific and clinical fields, across countries, and attending scientific meetings to broaden our horizons and discuss solutions to these challenges should be prioritized. This is the essence of the ESCAP conferences of which the next one has the above title.

Europe is on the move and so is child and adolescent psychiatry.

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