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WPA Position Statement on High Quality Post-Graduate Training in Psychiatry

The World Psychiatric Association (WPA) for the benefit of our patients places the highest importance on the quality of training for psychiatrists at all levels. This includes training at all levels including: undergraduate, post-graduate and continuing medical education (CME).

In this Position Statement, we note that there exist huge variations between countries not only in levels and duration of training but also in quality and supervision of training especially at undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

In order to ensure that our patients get the best treatment they need and deserve no matter where in the world they reside, WPA makes the following recommendations.

We urge all our member associations and societies to disseminate these to regulatory bodies, all trainees and training facilities.

WPA recommends that:

1. Our patients should receive and expect the highest levels of professional standards of psychiatric care, regardless of the training grade of the doctor treating them. Trainees (residents) must be aware of the high levels of responsibility and trust placed on them by patients, their carers and families and others.
2. Those responsible for organising and delivering training are accessible, fair and trained in up-to-date methods of assessment and therapeutic interventions. As professionals, it is critical that trainees are truly engaged in the process of training. They should be able to raise concerns without fear and be encouraged to share ideas for improving the quality of their

training. The training should be seen as a two-way process, and the trainers and trainees should have regular confidential supervision sessions.

3. Trainees at all stages should be encouraged to demonstrate professionalism at all levels including ethical and culturally appropriate practice.
4. Trainees should be encouraged to participate actively in training so that they are fully prepared to be high quality independent practitioners at the end of their training.
5. Local health care systems and regulations must be taken into account while designing and delivering training. Cultural values and settings should be recognised. Core training should be of a high standard matching international levels and higher training should focus on specific needs of the country. Training should follow international standards with due and appropriate cultural variations.
6. Training takes place in the context of service delivery, so it is imperative that a regulated amount of time for training only be set aside. This would include attending ward rounds, grand rounds, journal clubs, academic lectures and activities and suitable conferences. Only organisations that provide a safe environment for training with sufficient time and resources should be encouraged to provide training.
7. Trainees need regular assessment of progression through training, using a judicious mix of competency based assessment and knowledge based assessment. WPA recommends that the assessment processes are well-regulated, evidence based and delivered by highly trained trainers. Assessment for and of training are both relevant but the former is more relevant in order to improve standards of training.
8. Training settings should be accredited by a body accountable for standards of care and training.
9. Supervisors need to receive regular training in the tasks of supervision with regular booster sessions.
10. WPA urges policy makers in each country to create enough training posts to ensure that sufficient numbers and range of placements are available to meet the comprehensive mental health needs of its population.

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