Psychiatric residents’ cultural competence training: could it contribute to commitment against Stigma and Inequality?

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Abstract

Introduction: Cultural competence has become an obligation in a society that highlights human rights and equity. Due to its colonial history Portugal has always been a multiracial country. This diversity has been further expanded due to the recent arrival of different migrant populations to Portugal. Psychiatric services reflects this diversity with growing admissions of foreigners with different cultural backgrounds which bring increasing difficulties in the management of these patients.

Objectives: To review the existent European residents’ training programs concerning cultural competence and to compare them with the ones delivered in Portugal.

Methods: EPA guidance on cultural competence training outlines some of the key issues related to cultural competence and how to deal with these. Cultural competence represents a comprehensive response to the mental health care needs of immigrant patients and requires knowledge, skills and attitudes which can improve the effectiveness of psychiatric treatment.

Discussion and Conclusions: Cultural competency and training are believed to be a positive value in psychiatric residents’ training. Furthermore, this training and the contact with diverse migrant populations could contribute to build a stronger awareness against stigma and inequality in future professionals.