Global mental health – going from HIC to LIC

M. Pinto da Costa¹ and José M. C. Almeida²


Abstract

Introduction: A growing movement to High Income Countries (HIC) is increasing, being a signal of the current globalization. While facing these movement flows, it can be demanding to adapt the gained knowledge to the resource settings. Services in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMIC) are often poorly resourced, being frequent the struggle to provide care. Nevertheless, the original ways to overcome the challenges and constraints faced in these settings, can be examples of different means to treat or prevent mental illness from which we can learn.

Objectives: To promote the discussion on the challenges and opportunities of cooperation and professional medical mobility from HIC to LMIC.

Methods: To present the experience of a European junior doctor in an African setting in the capital city of Angola, Luanda.

Results: This inter-continental medical professional experience in an environment with different background and less resources to provide care, has been very challenging and enriching, also to establish comparisons with different health systems. When settings face constraints with increased levels of poverty and social deprivation, it is a challenge to deliver mental health care, being essential to advocate towards the engagement of policy-makers and planners. Developing and promoting professional medical cooperation between HIC and LMIC can be a strategy in this global world, while HIC society face crisis and certain LMIC rise financially. The effects of this medical professional mobility, promoting junior doctors to go across borders worldwide, are beyond the increased knowledge or the encouragement to joint projects, and can reach establishing durable cooperations.

Conclusions: The challenges faced on the ground in this experience encouraged me to advocate to further comparisons, and endorse critical thinking in regards to public health priorities and innovative responses to the burden of care.

Supplementary material: Complete presentation available at http://ijcnmh.arc-publishing.org