International experiences that shape professional identities in Hungary

Petra Ulbert1, Luca Egervári2, Hajnalka Nórándt-Pásztor3, Nóra Horváth4, Balázs Jeges5, Anett Balázs5, Attila Nagy5, and Tibor Jáger4


Abstract

Introduction: Studying abroad during university or even short term foreign work experiences can have life altering effects by broadening one’s horizon on both personal and professional levels.

Objectives: Our aim was to assess the international experiences and their influences on the professional lives of the members of the Hungarian Association of Psychiatric Trainees (HAPT).

Methods: A survey was sent out to all HAPT members regarding previous international educational experiences and international scientific or clinical work experiences, and their influence on the participants’ professional identities.

Results: Erasmus experiences have been the most popular during university years, few of our members have tried the EFPT Exchange during the past year, some had the chance to attend international congresses and make a poster presentation or publish an article in an international scientific journal during their residency. All of the responders claimed that these experiences had a great effect on their choice of career, work style and their professional identities. However, the majority of the HAPT members have not yet had international experiences to affect their professional lives.

Discussion and Conclusions: Since HAPT was formed 1.5 years ago, we are still in the phase of recruitment, with a larger handful of members. Therefore, our sample was not representative, and our conclusions may not reflect the real conditions in Hungary. Consequently, further surveys will be necessary on this matter. However, we find it important that all responders highlighted the benefits and positive outcomes on their professional lives in relation with their international experiences. It seems that international educational, work or scientific experiences have a beneficial role in shaping professional identities. In the future, we would like to encourage and facilitate these experiences among HAPT members, thus contributing to the national psychiatric training system and our members’ professional identities.

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

1Petz Aladár Regional Hospital, Hungary
2Semmelweis University, Kütvölgyi Clinical Center, Budapest, Hungary
3University of Szeged, Szent-Györgyi Albert Clinical Center, Hungary
4Péterfy Sándor Hospital, Hungary
5University of Debrecen, Clinical Center, Hungary

Correspondence: lucaegervari@hotmail.com

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