EFPT International Brain Drain Study

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Abstract

Introduction: Migration of mental health professionals is an important phenomenon influencing mental health services of host and donor countries. Data on medical migration in Europe is very limited, particularly in the field of young doctors and psychiatry. To research this hot topic, the European Federation of Psychiatric Trainees (EFPT) conducted the EFPT Brain Drain Survey.

Objectives: To identify the impact of previous international experiences on migration, and to understand the characteristics, patterns and reasons of migration, as well as what is an attractive job for psychiatry trainees and what needs to be improved in psychiatry.

Methods: In this cross-sectional European multicentre study, data were collected from 2281 psychiatric trainees across 33 countries. All participants answered to the EFPT Brain Drain Survey reporting their attitudes and experiences on migration.

Results: Two-thirds of the trainees had not had a short-mobility experience in their lifetime, but those that went abroad were satisfied with their experiences, reporting that these influenced their attitude towards migration positively. The majority of the trainees has considered leaving the country they currently live in. Flows showed that Switzerland and United Kingdom are within the main host countries, whereas countries as Romania highlights from the main donor countries. ”Pull factors” were mostly personal reasons, whereas typically “push factors” were mainly financial reasons. Indeed, trainees that wanted to leave the country were significantly more dissatisfied with their income. There is nevertheless an atypical pattern of migration worth to be further analysed.

Discussion: The possibility to endorse this discussion in a symposium on workforce and human resources, presenting and discussing the findings from the EFPT Brain Drain study, may raise awareness on the current trends, help to elucidate the underlying issues and recommend possible systems of support.

Conclusions: Migration within psychiatry will probably to a certain extent continue, being therefore essential to enhance support to those who migrate, and actually influence the mental health care provided internationally.

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