

CURRENT ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN EUROPEAN PSYCHIATRY. AN OVERVIEW

W. Rutz

Dpt., Social Work, University for Applied Sciences, Stockholm, Sweden

In discussions within and in communications directed to the recently re-established EPAs Ethical Committee a wide range of important ethical challenges has appeared, including e.g. the need for a forum to get advice for colleagues in ethical complicated situations, to underline and define ethical principles in clinical and research practice, to investigate ethical demands and boundaries regarding user involvement, to underline the need of not only evidence based but even value based practices.

In order to get guidance from our member states and their professional societies, the ethical committee has carried out an international European survey directed to national psychiatric associations and national ethical reference persons. The survey contained amongst others questions about the most frequent experienced ethical problems in the respective country.

By doing this, a significant diversity became apparent, seemingly influenced by the psychiatric professional development in the countries, but even showing differences in the sensitivity to cultural and societal - political factors.

Thus, with respect to the diversities in our European countries, it appears important to maintain a continuous professional discussion on ethical issues, even considering the processes and changes ongoing due to the political and sociocultural development as well as psychiatric scientific improvements and research implications.

A need to put ethical issues and development on the EPAs agenda is evident as well as the need to continuously improve and discuss international and national ethical guidelines and practical clinical strategies. Feasible ways regarding the future work of our ethical committee will be presented.