

EQuiP Meeting, London, 07-09 June 2002

Fifth Turkish National Family Practice Congress performed

New residency education law on the way

29th family practice department active

Family physicians strive for academic advance

Comprehensive book of patient records

Treatment guidelines for primary care

Ministry of Health vocational training meeting

Family physicians get closer with untrained practitioners

- **Fifth Turkish National Family Practice Congress performed**

More than 300 family physicians met during the national congress between 27 to 30 May 2002 in Adana. With 145 oral and poster presentations, the congress was a successful activity of the Çukurova University Family Practice Department and Turkish Association of Family Physicians. The main theme of the congress was "continuity in primary health care" Dr. Füsün Sayek, the president of the Turkish Medical Association was present at the opening ceremony. In her speech, she stressed the importance of collaboration between professional organizations leading to a hope-promising atmosphere for future relations.

National family practice congresses and days will be organized alternatively each year. The increasing number of departments and academic staff lead to a competition between departments. The next family practice days will be organized in Sivas in April 2003.

- **New residency education law on the way**

One of the problems family physicians face during their residency education in Turkey is the distribution of the time reserved for different specialties. According to the current regulations family practice residency consists of rotations at internal medicine, pediatrics, gynecology and obstetrics, emergency medicine, and psychiatry wards with durations of 9, 9, 8, 6, and 4 months respectively, making a total of three years. Education in primary care facilities is not included in this curriculum. With the new law, which is currently waiting to be signed by the minister of health, a board consisting of representatives from specialty associations, ministry of health, and the higher educational council will designate the contents of residency education.

- **30th family practice department active**

Forty medical faculties are actively teaching in Turkey. Unfortunately, there are still some faculties without family practice departments, but this situation is rapidly changing. Fatih University Medical Faculty established the 30th department in Ankara. Although not actively involved in medical education, the department is giving primary health care in two different centers in the city with three family physicians.

- **Family physicians strive for academic advancement**

The current number of family physicians with academic titles in Turkey is around 40 consisting of 1 professor, 5 associate professors, and 35 assistant professors. Recently three more family physicians passed the scientific phase of the two-stage exam for associate professorship. The number of full professors has to be at least five, in order to constitute an associate professorship jury of family physicians, which is expected to be accomplished within the next five years.

- **Comprehensive book of patient records**

A working party on the development of patient records was established during the first national family practice

days in 2001. With 13 members, this group is trying to develop guidelines for high quality patient records in family practice. Sample patient record sheets, guidelines in keeping patient records, software programs for record keeping in family practice, and translation of ICD10 codes into Turkish have been completed so far. The group has decided to collect its products in a comprehensive book on patient records. It is expected that with the support of our professional association, such a book will support the efforts to increase the quality of record keeping in family practice.

- Treatment guidelines for primary care

Until recently there was no therapy guideline for the use of primary care physicians in Turkey. This was leading to very different diagnoses and therapies between physicians resulting in mistrust to primary care physicians on one side, and malpractice on the other. In the leadership of the ministry of health, more than 200 medical doctors from different specialties came together to develop diagnosis and therapy guidelines for primary health care. Family physicians from the Netherlands and Denmark supported the work as consultants. The first meeting of a series was done in February 2002 resulting in the development of guidelines for 28 diseases. 22 more headings were discussed in the second meeting in May 2002. Participants of the second meeting were from 20 different specialties including untrained practitioners and family physicians. Objective is to develop a guideline with around 150 headings. With the completion of this project, Turkish primary health care is expected to advance one step further in the modern world.

- Ministry of Health vocational training meeting

The ministry of health has started to give a 10-day vocational training for newly graduated practitioners before they are sent to primary health care offices. Although this activity does not intend to train the 40 thousand untrained practitioners who are currently active in the field, having established a core educational team facilitates the Ministry of Health to spread this education to all untrained practitioners. Family physicians try to increase the content and duration of the probable vocational training and implement family practice departments in the process.

- Family physicians get closer with untrained practitioners

Turkey has two parties currently active in primary health care: untrained practitioners, and family physicians. Until currently the two sides could not find the right atmosphere for collaboration. Indeed there were some conflicts with regard to representation of primary care and the education of untrained practitioners, but fortunately this situation is about to change with the efforts from both sides. First seeds of this approachment were thrown during the 6th national education congress of untrained practitioners. Some of the family practice department chairmen (Dr. Nezhir Dagdeviren from Trakya University) were invited to the congress as attendants. Good relations were preserved after the congress too. Recently a group of family physicians, including the vice president of Turkish Association of Family Physicians (Prof. Suleyman Gorpelioglu) had a meeting with the representative of the Foundation of Medical Publishers. Consensus was reached to participate and support each other in any kind of activities.

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