



European Medical Students' Association

Association Européenne des Étudiants en Médecine

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Statement on the WHO European Framework for Action on Mental Health 2021-2025 and the new Mental Health Coalition

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As the European Medical Students' Association (EMSA), we have made mental health one of our organisations' priorities and welcome the efforts made on the 2021 - 2025 WHO Framework for Action on Mental Health.

The stigmatisation of mental health issues, mental health literacy, insufficient investment in the area as well as low availability of mental health services are some aspects which have been present for quite some time, having now been exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Investments need to be made in the infrastructure and training of mental health professionals in order to increase the capacity of mental health services for all age and societal groups, with a focus on people at risk, independent of socio-economic background, to be able to address the need for these services more effectively.

Good mental health has to be promoted while ensuring that the social determinants of poor mental health are addressed comprehensively.

European medical students have made a considerable effort to raise awareness on the topic of mental health involving surveys conducted amongst our members as well as the creation of booklets containing non-formal educational activities to be used as an awareness toolkit for our faculty member organisations and partners.

A survey conducted by our organisation has unfortunately indicated an increase in mental health issues throughout the pandemic. The mental health of future healthcare providers plays a crucial part in being able to provide qualitative services. Medical students oftentimes do not seek help in these matters due to stigmatisation surrounding the topic and fear of repercussions in professional careers later on. While some universities have anonymous programs in place, these are not always existent or do not have enough capacity to take on all students who may be seeking for anonymous help.

EMSA deems the conduction of annual surveys and assessment initiatives incredibly important and welcomes the creation of a mental health database for the performance of mental health systems and the population's mental health status. We believe such surveys to be particularly essential during the pandemic to evaluate the mental health of healthcare professionals, students and patients alike - an endeavour in which the collaboration with NSAs representing healthcare professionals, healthcare students and patients could be of immense benefit.

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