

Daniel Widmer¹

Les bonnes raisons de devenir membre de l'European Forum for Primary Care

La promotion des soins primaires

L'European Forum for Primary Care (EFPC) a été fondé en 2005 avec comme objectif un souci de santé publique: améliorer la santé de la population par la promotion des soins primaires. Basé sur une solide évidence scientifique, cet objectif est partagé par ses membres qui viennent de divers horizons: monde politique, médical, infirmier, pharmacien; travailleurs sociaux, gestionnaires de santé publique, assureurs, chercheurs.

Etre informé et créer des contacts

Etre membre de l'EFPC, c'est recevoir régulièrement de l'information, en particulier scientifique, mais aussi politique (en provenance des Etats, de l'EU, de l'OMS et autres organisations) sur les soins primaires. C'est la possibilité d'entrer en contact avec d'autres personnes actives en Europe dans ce domaine, par le site Web ou par le secrétariat (groupes de discussions thématiques).

Position Papers

L'EFPC, sur la base de la contribution de ses membres, publie sa position sur différents thèmes, comme les maladies chroniques, la santé mentale, la collaboration interprofessionnelle, etc.

La zone Europe et les organisations internationales

L'EFPC ne se limite pas aux membres de l'UE mais rend compte de tous les pays de la zone Europe. Il collabore aussi avec des organisations internationales comme l'OMS ou la WONCA, etc.

¹ Chef de la délégation suisse à l'UEMO, représentant de l'IUMG à l'EFPC

La conférence de l'EFPC, lieu de rencontres et de débats

Tous les deux ans le Forum organise une conférence dédiée au développement futur des soins primaires. La conférence a eu lieu cette année à Göteborg en Suède. La prochaine conférence sur le thème «Balancing the Primary Care and Secondary Care provision for more integration and better health outcomes», aura lieu les 9 et 10 septembre 2013 à Istanbul en Turquie.

Visites d'étude

Sur la demande de ses membres, le Forum organise des visites d'études dans plusieurs pays pour étudier les bonnes pratiques.

Rejoignez-nous...

L'EFPC est donc un forum générateur d'idées. Pour l'instant en Suisse, seul l'Institut Universitaire de médecine générale de Lausanne en est membre. J'encourage toute personne ou toute institution intéressée à nous rejoindre. L'EFPC est la preuve que des professions d'horizons différents peuvent partager des valeurs communes.

Consultez le site Web: www.euprimarycare.org

Correspondance:

Dr Daniel Widmer
Spécialiste en médecine générale FMH
2, av. Juste-Olivier
1006 Lausanne
widmer[at]primary-care.ch

EFPC at a glance



The European Forum for Primary Care was initiated in 2005.

Its aim is to improve the health of the population by promoting strong Primary Care. This is done by advocating for Primary Care, by generating evidence on Primary Care and by exchanging information between its members. The Forum seeks to expand its current membership of more than 100 institutions and 50 individuals and to become a leading force for Primary Care in Europe.

Introduction

Strong primary care (PC) produces better health outcomes against lower costs. That is the briefest summary of available scientific evidence. By promoting strong PC the population's health can be improved. Strong PC does not emerge spontaneously. It requires appropriate conditions at the health care system level and in actual practice to make PC providers able and willing to take responsi-

bility for the health of the population under their care. The challenges that European health care systems face, require a process of strengthening of PC everywhere. There is a strong need to collect and share information about what structures and strategies matter and to communicate these with key-decision makers at national and international level.

Our vision on primary care

The majority of health complaints of the people are dealt with through self-care and primary care, delivered in the local community. Addressing the needs of individuals in the context of their families and communities is one of the key features of primary care. In home care for the ageing population, in intercultural care and in underserved areas, primary care contributes to social coherence. General practitioners, who are the core discipline of primary care, operate in the local primary health care team, adopting a multi-disciplinary approach. A patient-centred approach, with special attention to the most vulnerable groups in society is another key feature of primary care. It requires unrestricted access of patients to primary care services. A third keyfeature is the navigation func-

tion: related to the wide variety of complaints that are presented at the primary care level and to the fragmentation that follows from specialist and disease-oriented care, primary care professionals help patients to navigate through the health care system. In a number of European countries the gate keeping role of general practitioners makes them responsible for adequate referral and guidance of patients, under the right and safe conditions. primary care has shown to be well positioned and able to offer preventive care, thereby establishing a natural link between curative and public health.

There is ample evidence to support the claim that Primary Care offers better care and health outcomes against lower costs.

In a changing environment

Ageing of our European societies, a concern about rising costs and about quality of health care and a strong wish to safeguard access to health care, are common issues in all European countries. Most countries in Europe are in the process of adjusting and reshaping their health system. While many Primary Care initiatives blossom at local level, mainstream health care and health policy often are not oriented towards supporting and developing Primary Care. This presents a formidable challenge for those who are involved in practice and in policy.

Increasingly, policies in the European Union impact on health and health services. Through guidelines and ordinances, but also through the Open Method of Coordination and the allocation of subsidies, opportunities are created to develop international exchange and to improve health systems through a shared vision. On the other hand, it creates the challenge to balance the market and competition oriented approach with the collaborative character of community-oriented primary care.

What are the aspirations of the European Forum for Primary Care?

The basic aim of the Forum is to improve the European population's health by promoting strong Primary Care. This will be done by monitoring the state of Primary Care in the European countries, by collecting information on conditions that matter for strong Primary Care, and by exchanging experiences. The Forum, partly through its Working Groups, supports PHC services at local or regional level, influences (health) policies at national and international level (EU, WHO) and www.euprimarycare.org supports research.

The Forum connects three different groups: the health care field, health policy makers, and the producers and evaluators of health

care information. Each of them addresses three levels: the local or district level, the national level, and the supra-national level.

By linking policy, practice and research the Forum stimulates policy making based on vision and evidence as much as it intends to support PC practice oriented towards quality and equity.

Multilevel forum on European primary care development

	Health care field	Health policy	Information and monitoring
Local/district level	Local initiatives and health centres	Local/district government	Evaluators of local initiatives
National level	National colleges, professional associations	Ministries of Health	National research institutes, university groups
Supranational level	WONCA Europe, EFAD (Dieticians, ENOTHE (Occupational Therapists), EuroPharm Forum (Pharmacists), EUPHA, Active Citizenship Network, European Patients Forum	European Union, WHO (European & Global Office)	EUPHA section Health Services Research, European Observatory on Health Care Systems and Policies

Based on its view on multidisciplinary primary care, in addition to general practice the participation of other disciplines and professions in PC is indispensable.

It goes without saying that the patient and citizen perspective is underlying the aims and activities of the Forum. Involvement of patient and citizen organisations in the Forum is a natural evolution, since Primary Care is about putting the patient in the centre.

The Forum has a message to spread and helps to learn lessons. In this it has strong ambitions in particularly towards the Central and Eastern part of Europe and it intends to be well heard and listened to. It is independent from any established interests and has developed policies to safeguard its independence.

What the European Forum for Primary Care needs

In order to realise its ambitions, the EFPC seeks expansion of its membership and additional funding. All members pay a limited membership fee, adapted to their size and possibility to contribute. However, currently, in particularly members from the Central and Eastern European countries have difficulties to pay their financial contribution and sustain their membership.

Times of austerity also give the opportunity for change. The pressure on health care systems to contain their costs may lead to reinforcing their PC orientation, to making better use of resources and to introducing adequate changes that may reduce inequities and be long-lasting.

The Forum welcomes sponsors that support its mission and work. Also, assistance to members in maintaining membership everywhere in Europe will enable them to take part in the Forum's agenda and activities, convincing their policy makers to invest in accessible, equitable and cost-effective health care systems.

EFPC; Utrecht, The Netherlands, September 2012

Le «European Forum for Primary Care» (EFPC) est une plateforme d'échange multidisciplinaire pour toutes les professionnels impliqués dans les soins de santé primaires: médecins de famille, pharmaciens, soignants, hommes politiques chargés des dossiers de santé, groupes de qualité, etc. Son objectif est d'encourager l'accompagnement multidisciplinaire des patients atteints de maladies aiguës ou chroniques. Le forum n'est pas en concurrence avec la WONCA (World Family Doctors, association académique mondiale des médecins de famille) ou l'UEMO (European Union of General Practitioners, association politique européenne des sociétés des médecins de famille).

Bruno Kissling