



European Community Based Mental Health Service Providers Network

European Partnership for Delivering Quality Community Mental Health Services

Meeting Summary Fifth EUCOMS meeting in Málaga, 4-5 October 2018

Introduction

We are happy with the participation of 64 people representing 40 mental health organisations from 13 countries in the 5th EUCOMS meeting, which this time took place in Málaga, Spain. Participants were invited to network and learn from the intersectorial approach in Spain, both from what is going well and what could be improved. The meeting also provided the opportunity to gather input on the proposed government and financial structure to make EUCOMS a sustainable organisation. This document provides a summary of what has been discussed. You can find the full powerpoint presentation of the meeting via <https://www.eucoms.net/agenda/fifth-eucoms-network-meeting-in-malaga>.

Intersectoral Approach in Andalusia and Spain

Spain is a country with 46,6 million inhabitants of which 8,4 million live in Andalusia and 1,6 million in Malaga. 3,5% or 280.00 people in Andalusia received treatment for their common or severe mental disorder in 2017. The process of psychiatric reform in Andalusia started with its autonomy and finalised in 2000, closing all public psychiatric hospitals. In 2008 the Andalusian government developed a new distribution of mental health services according to a community-mental health care model now consisting of 1) community mental health care centres (n=78) 2) acute inpatient units (n=20); 2) day hospitals (n=15); 3) child/adolescent units (n=14); 4) rehabilitation units (n=9) and 5) therapeutic communities (n=15).

One of the most original and creative aspects of the Andalusian mental health care system is the network of social services to support citizen with severe mental disorder (SMD) in the community. In 1993 FAISEM (Andalusian Foundation for Social Integration of the People with Mental Disorders) was created as a public foundation jointly funded by the four government departments most closely related to the provision of social support for people with SMD (health, social affairs, employment and economy and finance). FAISEM mainly includes residential, occupational and vocational facilities and programmes and access to any of the FAISEM programmes is through the public mental health services. There are several levels of coordination between FAISEM, the health services and the social services.

The integration of mental health care in primary care is limitedly developed in Andalusia. An example of the integration of mental health care into primary care is the liaison-attachment model to share care for patients between GP's and mental health care professionals where they meet and discuss cases every day. Sharing the care for people with a mild to moderate mental illness has resulted in the prevention of medicalisation, a decrease of the number of referrals, and more time for the psychiatrist to treat the difficult cases. Because of a lack of resources, it is important to involve volunteers and to attain resources to assure continuity of care for people who receive mental health care in primary care.

Small scale programs part of the community mental health care system include employment of peer workers in health services, assertive outreach teams, outreach teams for homeless people with a mental illness, and teams specialised in the first episodes of psychosis. The latest comprehensive mental health care plan of Andalusia is PISMA III (2016-2020), does support these initiatives and focusses on strengthening of promotion, prevention and a recovery approach promoting the human rights of people with a mental illness. However, these programs are under threat because of lack of resources.

The strengths of the mental health care system in Andalusia is that it is an integrated system that covers nearly 95% of the population with FAISEM, as a special example of a network of social services, to support the integration of people with a severe mental illness. At the same time the future challenge lies with the coordination between FAISEM, the mental health care services, primary care and the addiction network. Last but not least a remaining challenge is to assure enough funding to create and foster this collaboration and to implement programs such as assertive outreach teams in all health areas with enough and qualified staff.

In the total of Spain there are 60 assertive community treatment (ACT) teams that offer intensive, multi-disciplinary home-based treatment for people with a severe mental illness. However, most of them have a low fidelity to the original model. There is also one crisis resolution team (CRT) that focusses on brief periods of support for people that experience a crisis which started in September 2018 in Aviles.

Service users and families in Spain are represented by 'Salud Mental España' since 1983 now integrating more than 300 groups with 47000 members. Concerns they have in Spain are that there is a lack of: complete data on mental health services provision and usage; formal mechanisms to provide mental health care with most people receiving care from informal care providers; coordination between health and social service. They also highlight that stigma and the violation of human rights of people with a mental illness in Spain is an ongoing problem. Mundo Bipolar, another important service user organisation in Spain and in the European Union also stressed the need to reduce stigma and the support of human rights of people with mental illness.



Site Visits

Participants got the opportunity to see services in Andalusia. On the program were services from FAISEM, including a supported housing facility (boarding house and supervised flats), a day care centre (part of the health service) a therapeutic community of health, a rehabilitation unit and services part of the public mental health care system consisting of a day hospital and a community mental health care centre.



Results of the Exchange Visits

Gamle Oslo, a mental health service provider from Oslo visited Servicio Andaluz de Salud in Malaga, Spain.

(The exchange visit to Oslo will take place before the next EUCOMS meeting, probably around March 2019). Inspire Wellbeing a mental health service in Northern Ireland/UK visited a mental health service within the same organization in the Republic of Ireland and vice versa, with a different health system. They used the ‘manual for site visits to learn about implementation of community-based mental health care’ to learn from the other service about how they think, act and work in order to bring in practice the principles of good community mental health care as described in the ‘Consensus Paper on Fundamental Principles of Community Based Mental Health Care’.

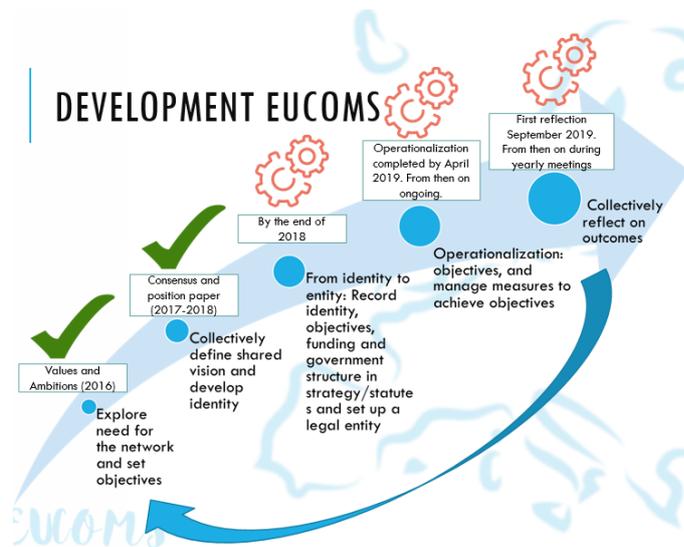
They described it as a valuable and interesting learning experience. Two organisations volunteered to present the outcomes of their exchange visit; Lister from The Netherlands and Dachverband Gemeinde Psychiatrie from Germany. The results of the site visits will be available to members.





Organisation and Sustainability of EUCOMS

The planning for the establishment of EUCOMS as a foundation, a proposal for a governance and financial structure were presented to discuss with the EUCOMS participants. Feedback that we received included that there is a possibility to facilitate placing students within European service providers as part of their curriculum, and the possibility to the set-up a European community mental health services implementation science network. Another point is that the position of EUCOMS in relation to other network and organisations should be crystalized. We also received feedback on the membership fee. Overall there was agreement that there was a need to formalize the network as a foundation. The proposed planning is that the statutes will be sent out to the members by half December and that they will be finalized with the steering group at the start of January 2019. By the end of the year EUCOMS as a foundation should be a fact. Before the next meeting in Lille, June 13-14th 2019, hosted by WHOCC (Lille, France) / EPSM Lille Metropole the first year plan and the new staff members of EUCOMS should be presented.



Workshops

On the second day of the meeting participants could participate in two workshops. Each of the workshops highlighted one of the intersectoral approaches in mental health care in Malaga discussing their successes and challenges. The workshops were provided by PISMES, an outreach team for homeless people with a mental illness in Malaga; FAISEM with their approach to help people with a mental illness to find employment; ARTEDUCA with an art therapy program for people with a mental illness in collaboration with musea in Málaga; and 'EN PRIMERA PERSONA' (a mental health service users led federation), who explained about their work with peer support groups.

Lessons Learned and Take-Home Messages

- Andalusia has one of the most original and creative network of social services to support citizen with severe mental disorder (SMD) in the community; the Andalusian Foundation for Social Integration of the People with Mental Disorders (FAISEM). This is a good example of integrated care connecting mental and social services.
- At the same time the future challenges lie with the coordination between FAISEM, the mental health care services, primary care and the drug dependence network.
- The latest comprehensive mental health care plan of Andalusia is FISMA III (2016-2020), focusses on strengthening of promotion, prevention and a recovery approach promoting the human rights of people with a mental illness.
- However, the policy is not implemented in practice with a lack of resources to prolong and scale-up outreach teams, teams specialised in first psychosis, the integration of mental health care in primary care, and programs focused on the employment of peer expertise in mental health care services.
- There is a strong family organisation in Spain ‘Salud Mental España’ that also includes service users now integrating more than 300 Local associations and regional federations with 47000 members. They and Mundo Bipolar, another important service user organisation in Spain, stress the need to reduce stigma and the support of human rights of people with mental illness.
- The exchange visits were experiences as a valuable and fun learning experience and we have two volunteers to present their outcomes at the next EUCOMS meeting in, Lille (June, 13th and 14th 2019).
- EUCOMS will become a foundation and will present its first year plan in and the new staff members at the next meeting in Lille, June 13-14, hosted by WHOCC (Lille, France) / EPSM Lille Metropole the first year plan. Members are requested feedback on the position paper and statutes of the network.