

News

Supplement

9th International Conference on Health Promoting Hospitals, Copenhagen, May 16–18, 2001

The European WHO Network on Health Promoting Hospitals (HPH), what role to play?

The European WHO HPH Network had its 9th Conference in Copenhagen from May 16th to 18th 2001 hosted by the Danish National Health Promoting Hospitals network, Bispebjerg Hospital and the Ministry of Health. View the Programme (pdf 423 kB) and the Book of Abstracts (pdf 3.620 kB).

With the mission as stated by the General Director of WHO, Gro Harlem Brundtland, in the WHO Health Report 2000: “While our work in this area must be consistent with the values of health for all, our recommendations should be based on evidence rather than ideology” the Conference focused on aspects as:

- Health problems in Europe and the role of the HPH
- National Health policies and their influence on the strategies and the activities of HPH
- Evidence based health promotion and preventive programmes in hospitals
- Social inequity in health and its implications for HPH

And as the dominant issue:

- How do Health Promoting Hospitals integrate health promotion and disease preventing activities in the daily clinical routines?

It is a mutual experience that the charter on Health for All and the Vienna Recommendations on Health Promoting Hospitals give the values and principles for HPH. However, it is also the experience that the transformation of these values and principles to concrete daily clinical activities in the hospitals is difficult, partly due to the professional values and the hospital context as it has developed over time.

The strategy of the Danish Network of HPH thus influenced the focus of the conference and also was the theme of many of the discussions in the conference.

The Danish network includes more than half of the public hospitals in Denmark, and the network has chosen a multidisciplinary approach setting up guidelines for health promotion and disease prevention in focus areas given priority by the networks general assembly. Members of task forces or working groups are health professionals and much weight is put on broad representation of all relevant professionals in the groups.

The overall strategy can be summarized:

1. The network must develop its activities in respect for the principles as lined out in the Vienna recommendation on Health Promoting Hospitals.
2. The programmes taken up must be appropriate to the needs of patients and population.
3. Health promoting and disease preventing activities must be evidence based.
4. Health promotion and preventive services are to be integrated in the care given by the hospitals.

The definition of programmes as being appropriate to the needs of patients and population implies, that significant health problems should be addressed and the programmes must include elements of as well primary, secondary as tertiary prevention and the programmes must respect the cultural background and the integrity of the patient.

The prerequisite for evidence based health promotion and disease prevention is the identification of credible scientific evidence, the establishment of new evidence according to scientific standards and strengthening of research in the field.

The integration of health promotion and disease prevention in hospital services depends on an active role of the hospital's leadership and implies that standards and guidelines for the activities must be defined. Professional ownership is to be ensured and the compe-

tences of all groups of health care professionals must be developed.

These principles were broadly accepted as the basis for the future activities in the European network and it was decided to establish a working group with the aim to define standards for health promotion and disease prevention in hospitals.

The HPH Network is now in a phase moving from ideology to implementation in daily clinical activity but still consistent with the values of Health for All.

The 10th Conference on Health Promoting Hospitals will be in Bratislava, Slovakia 22-24 May, 2002

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