

## **Psychosomatic care and education in psychosomatic medicine in Austria**

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In present-day Austria, psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapy enjoy significantly more socio-political and cultural recognition perhaps as a heritage from the days of the Austrian monarchy - than is reflected in their real presence. There is an immanent conflict between specialization in psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapy as an independent field of medicine and the integration of a psychosomatic basic approach into the general fields of medicine. The organization of psychotherapy is doubly anchored in the laws governing medical practice (PSY diploma: PSY-I Psychosocial Medicine, PSY-II Psychosomatic Medicine, PSY-III Psychotherapeutic Medicine) and the statutes governing the practice of psychotherapy; this, however, has not resolved the sensitive and only partially creative tension between the two Austrian medical health politics are currently characterized by renewed efforts to organize the field of psychosomatic medicine.

There is a strong movement in medical training to integrate psychotherapy: The specialization in psychiatry will include intensive 3 year psychotherapy training from 2006 on and we are trying to build up a sub-specialization (Additiv-Facharzt) in psychosomatic medicine for all doctors. The relation to psychiatry is not free of conflict because certain groups see psychosomatic medicine as exclusively belonging to the field of Psychiatry.

In the moment there are only few psychosomatic departments with a minimum of beds, but two greater psychosomatic hospitals (each over 100 beds) with the possibility of rational care under construction. Additionally it is intended to bring in to live integrated small psychosomatic units (6-8 beds) in general hospitals.

For the university hospitals and some main hospitals there exists a well functioning psychosomatic C/L service with sufficient manpower - not in the smaller hospitals. However the Austrian hospital law guarantees the right for psychosomatic and psychosocial therapy for every inpatient. Psychosomatic outpatient treatment is mainly run by psychotherapist with only rudimentary skills in the field.

The whole Austrian medical education was reformed in 2002/2003 along the reform curricula of Harvard/Maastricht. These curricula served as a model for integrative medical training leaving the strict boundaries of disciplines. For psychosomatic thinking and skill training it promises to be a breakthrough.