



Communications of the European Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

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Child and adolescent psychiatry in Austria

The Austrian Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry/Österreichische Gesellschaft für Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrie—ÖGKJP is the scientific society of the medical specialists for child and adolescent psychiatry working in this field of medicine in Austria including a number of allied professions according to the multidisciplinary approach of the field.

Austrian child and adolescent psychiatry has started in 1949 with the establishment of a small unit for child and adolescent neuropsychiatry at the Neuropsychiatric Department of the General Hospital of Vienna.

In 1950, the first small unit for children and adolescents with mental health problems was established in the General Hospital of Vienna at the Department of Neuropsychiatry. In 1975, “Neuropsychiatry of childhood and adolescence” was accepted by the Austrian Medical Association as a medical discipline reachable in addition to the discipline of “pediatrics” or to “neurology and psychiatry”. Subsequently, the first chair in Austria at a public university hospital was established at Vienna University (since 2004 Medical University of Vienna (MedUniWien) in 1975 and hold by Walter Spiel till 1991 followed by Max Hermann Friedrich till 2013.

In Innsbruck, the University of Innsbruck and later the Medical University of Innsbruck (MUI) has now established the second chair in Austria at a public university hospital, hold by Kathrin Sevecke since November 2013. Besides these 2 public chairs, one at Private Paracelsus Medical University (PMU) in Salzburg is run since 2009 and hold by Leonhard Thun-Hohenstein. These three chairs

are the only chairs in the country as the Medical University of Graz and the Medical Faculty of the University of Linz have no chairs established so far.

According to its bylaws, the ÖGKJP aims to promote preventive health care, recognition, and medical diagnosis of all mental diseases as well as the treatment, psychotherapy, and rehabilitation of children and adolescents suffering from mental and psychosomatic disorders. Besides this, the Austrian Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry organizes postgraduate training and is also involved in political lobbying for the needs of children and adolescents with mental problems and their families. This involves also ongoing effort for good relationships with the “neighbour-fields” pediatrics, neurology, and adult psychiatry. The ÖGKJP and the Austrian Medical Association work together in political efforts lobbying for a better patient-care, as Austria suffers from a shortage of inpatient, outpatient and day patient facilities by around 50 % of that what is needed and a shortage of specialists by around 70 %.

The ÖGKJP organizes every year one congress (the 31st will be held in 2015 in Salzburg, 2016 in Innsbruck, 2017 in Linz hosted by the local departments). A major effort is done to arrange every year 2-3 teaching courses devoted to the assistant doctors to train them in particular (a) in those topics which are not available in every department all over the country (e.g., specialist knowledge on treatment of substance abuse, forensic issues) and in general topics (e.g., psychopharmacology in children, diagnostic problems in pre-school children, neurological differential diagnoses, children of psychiatrically ill parents, video diagnostics of interaction). Besides this, the ÖGKJP has developed a short

interactive curriculum devoted to consult child psychiatrists only, for continuous education (since 2013) with complex topics covered like diagnostics of prodromal states, differential diagnoses between ADHD, and attachment disorders, etc.

The Board of ÖGKJP consists of eight members including one president and two vice-presidents (one pre-president and one post-president) being elected every 2 years. Besides the 3 presidential colleagues, the leaders of the education commission, the examination commission, the quality assurance commission, the cashier, and the general secretary are board members. An extended board meeting exists once a year involving representatives of allied disciplines and of the medical associations of the federal states.

Currently, Prof. Dr. med. Andreas Karwautz, Medical University of Vienna is president. The Society has grown since the establishment of this discipline as an independent medical discipline standing on its own in 2007 and has currently about 250 members.

The ÖGKJP is member of the ESCAP-group and of IACAPAP, and has good cooperation with the similar associations in Germany and Switzerland (DGKJP and SGKJPP).

The official journal of the Austrian Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry since 2013 is ‘neuropsychiatrie – vereinigt mit Psychiatrie und Psychotherapie’, published by Springer Verlag. Section Editor for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry is Prof. Andreas Karwautz, Vienna. All four issues per year include child and adolescent psychiatric topics. All members get a complimentary subscription by post, provided by the Austrian Society for free.

Child and adolescent psychiatrists are working in university departments, regional psychiatric services, in general hospitals, day hospitals, outpatient clinics, private practices, or in public health institutions. In 2014 (January), there were 178 active child and adolescent psychiatrists in Austria, 98 of them working in the core area “child and adolescent psychiatry”, the other within “pediatric psychosomatics” and “neuropsychiatry”. Pediatric psychosomatics (which is no discipline or subspecialty of pediatrics so far) is part of

pediatrics, based at pediatric departments and offered by pediatric specialists with additional expertise; neuropsychiatry is part of pediatrics and offered by pediatric specialists. The core area of child and adolescent psychiatry includes also some expertise in these two fields; however, it has a much broader focus not limited in psychosomatics and neuropsychiatry. In 2012, there was one child and adolescent psychiatrist available per about 30000 children and adolescents under the age of 18 with massive regional variation; this ratio is improving, but does not yet meet the needs. The postgraduate training schedule requires a total of 6 years of training to get the qualification as a specialist for “Child and Adolescent Psychiatry”. Sixty colleagues so far were successfully examined by the examination committee since the establishment of the specialty in 2007. From 2015, the training requirements are changing by law for all specialty fields. The new curriculum will start with a basic phase similar for all medical specialties followed by a 4-year phase of basic child and adolescent psychiatry training followed by three six-month modules focusing on specific topics like adolescent psychiatry, developmental psychiatry, addiction treatment or pediatric/psychosomatic medicine.

The ÖGKJP intends to increase European and international cooperation efforts via ESCAP, IACAPAP, and UEMS. The ESCAP congress 2019 will be held in Vienna, Austria.

Signed for the Board of the Austrian Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry/Österreichische Gesellschaft für Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrie (ÖGKJP):

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