

## EPA GAINING EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME REPORT

On the observership visit at the Ludwig-Maximilian University Clinic, Munich -Munich, Germany

Realised from August 1 to August 31, 2018

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### REPORT:

Being honoured and grateful to be chosen by The EPA Early Career Psychiatrists Committee as an awardee of Gaining Experience Program, I have spent one outstanding month (01-31.08.2018) of my Clinical Observership in Ludwig-Maximilian University Clinic, Munich, Germany. The report hereinafter describes this visit.

The whole experience met my expectations, as it gave me an opportunity to broaden my professional horizons and provided a unique professional and cultural understanding of the mental health services.

At my first day of visit in the LMU clinic I met my supervisor PD Dr. med. Ulrich Palm. Together with him and Prof. Dr. med. Frank Padberg we chose the clinical and research settings, that were most relevant to my professional interests and skills. Besides we had a tour in the historical building of the clinic, where Dr. Palm was kind to show me the former cabinets of Emil Kraepelin and Alois Alzheimer, which now serve as conference and lecture venues (please see the photos attached).

Dr. Palm did his best to develop a program which would fit all my professional interests. He facilitated contacts with other colleagues from different units of the clinic, was available to any inquiry throughout my visit and make my observership experience useful and pleasant.

The colleagues and professionals I met during my stay in the clinic were friendly and collaborative. I felt welcomed by each of them.

I was able to spend the time in different units of the clinic and communicate with colleagues and patients there, namely units of Day-clinic, Depression, Acute Psychiatry, Ambulatory. In each of these units I attended the rounds and the weekly meetings of mental health professionals, where in the Multidisciplinary team they discussed the bio-psycho-social aspects of patients' mental state. Also I attended clinical interviews conducted by consultant psychiatrists, where a lot of attention was paid to evaluation of patients' social functioning and not only to presence/absence of the psychopathological symptoms. The doctor-patient relationship was based on mutual participation and various treatment modalities were discussed with the patients. Besides the pharmacotherapy patients were provided with other psychosocial interventions and therapy, like psychoeducation, ergotherapy, musictherapy, social communication therapy.

Aforementioned might show that the most important emphasis in organizing mental health services should be put on the essence of the services and not only it's structure. Namely despite the fact that Germany in difference with Georgia is not prone to have Community based Mental Health Services, the clinical work is based on the Multidisciplinary approach and co-operational relations between mental health professionals and patients.

Also I had an opportunity to attend the Electroconvulsive Therapy and Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation therapy, which yet are not available in my country.

Moreover, I attended the research team meeting at the Institute of Psychiatric Phenomics and Genomics (IPPG), where we discussed our future possibility of collaboration to expand the study on the genetic basis of response to lithium treatment in bipolar disorder. Afterwards I attended the clinical part of the study procedures.

I did not have a chance to make a presentation on my home institution at LMU clinic, but I had many personal conversations with colleagues about organization of Mental Health Services in Georgia and current challenges of shifting from old to new system of Community Based MH Services. Being back to my home institution at the morning conference I did a presentation and talked about my observership experience. Together with the local mental health professionals we discussed the differences on the organizational and clinical levels and in the future will try to implement some changes in our clinical practice, as well as in organizing the daily work in our services.

In conclusion attending EPA GEP was an outstanding experience and an exceptional opportunity for me to improve my professional and organizational skills, as well as a great skill-building opportunity and personal growth experience. Many aspects were significant, starting from the different organization of the mental health services, as well as the influence of different cultures on the mental health care system and the patient's expectations. Among others it was impressing to see that despite cultural and organizational differences between my hosting and home institutions it is good doctor-patient relationship, along with adequate therapeutic skills and updated knowledge, which ensures optimum therapeutic outcome. Furthermore GEP gave me a chance to improve professional networks and built connections for research collaborations in the future.

My gratitude to those who made this experience possible: the EPA ECPC for providing me the opportunity to participate in this program. My program supervisor Dr. Ulrich Palm, who was always so attentive and supportive, thus strongly contributed to make my observership very efficient and useful.

The biggest thanks to Professor Thomas G. Schulze, who kindly invited me in his research department for IPPG team meeting and made the suggestion for future collaboration.

Special gratitude to Dr. Farah Klöhn, who gave me advices on different aspects of my stay in LMU clinic, as well as generally in Munich, kindly spend her time on explaining different aspects of clinical and organizational work of Ambulance and MH insurance in Germany, hereby making my experience unforgettable and enjoyable.

I'm also very grateful to the other colleagues and mental health professionals from LMU clinic: Dr. János Kálmán from IPPG research team, Dr. Fanny Senner from Day-clinic department, to colleagues from units of acute psychiatry and depression, who shared their experiences with me and made my stay in the LMU Clinic Munich so interesting and unique.

