

Malaga, October 4th

International professionals of the European Network of Community Based Mental Health Services (EUCOMS) have pointed out in an encounter in Málaga that the subject that is still pending is improvement of psycho-social teams, a need that all the countries participating have, among them, Holland and Spain.

The medical director of the Community Mental Health Service GGZ-Noord-Holland-Noord of Holland and president of the EUCOMS Network in Europe (EUCOMS) Mr. René Keet, has explained in a statement to EFE that there is still a need for awareness on an international level of mental health and has pointed out that the focus should be placed on genuine health care.

Mr. Keet has explained that a change process has taken place after the de-institutionalization of large psychiatric hospitals of the Nineties but has reminded that not only should models that do not fulfill requirements for offering quality mental health care, be destroyed, but that it is necessary to build alternatives.

Keet has pointed out that the European Network of Community Services for Mental Health (EUCOMS) do not suggest an ideal model but describe in six principles the base for adequate mental health treatment.

Respect for human rights, public health, patient recovery, effective intervention, network work and support among peers with ex patients are the bases proposed by these mental health professionals to offer adequate treatment depending on the context of each country.

Keet underlined the importance of respecting human rights as this not only means respecting freedom of the individual, but also his or her participation, right to a decent job and access to health care, integration of the patient in society so he or she could have a normal life and for these reasons he has praised the Andalusian health model.

Psychiatrist of the Mental Health Unit of the Regional Hospital and coordinator of the IBIMA Mental Health Group, Fermín Mayoral, has pointed out to EFE that from this European network an attempt is made to promote “compromise with community mental health that has not been developed yet in other countries”.

Mayoral has reminded us that improvements in mental health do not consist in solely closing old psychiatric hospitals, but “the creation of alternative services to cover social needs” which integrate patients and not “creating a parallel world” within a health center.

He has considered the standards offered by Andalusian public health although he considers that there should be “improvements in psychosocial teams”, tools that are demanded by all the professionals of this network formed by 58 organizations in 17 countries.

Mayoral has made it important to “promote protected employment with aid” as today the “future is uncertain and worrying” for these patients who confront a “very restrictive labor market”.

This professional has reminded us that although there are countries and regions in Spain that are “very advanced” psychosocial equipment is still a pending subject that is necessary to help patients with long term mental health problems. EFE