Poster 19

Vocational Emigration of Young Physicians

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Introduction: Whereas the number of applicants for medical studies has continuously increased over the last years, it is progressively assumed, that more and more physicians from Austria are emigrating due to vocational reasons. In order to understand this development, 7 colleagues, who had either recently completed their studies and were already working or were about to finish, were interviewed in 2013. Two of them had already emigrated and were working in Switzerland and Germany. The interviews were transcribed, evaluated by MaxQDA, and qualitatively interpreted by frequency analysis according to Mayring (2008).

Results: The working conditions in Austria, which would be “abnormally bad” (Interview II), were cited as one of the reasons for vocational emigration. This referred to the working hours, since “it is possible to work 32 hours in a row without any kind of control” (I), while in other occupational groups documented breaks are obligatory. Medicine was mentioned as “a wonderful occupation”, but 60 to 100 working hours per week make you lose the joy of working in the long run.

Besides the strictly hierarchic structure in the hospital it was criticized that medical assistants are not “of the same value” and – contrary to an attending – seldom get to sleep when on night duty (II). Payment was frequently mentioned. Although it was not rated as poor altogether, an hourly rate of approx. € 12,- was perceived as too low. It was also criticized that during internship you “do not get a particularly good training”, are mainly occupied with “bureaucratic things”, only get an average remuneration (V), and individual medical advancement is not encouraged. If you are lucky you are allowed to accompany the round after a few hours of blood collection (IV). The medical internship is still a prerequisite for many specializations (II) and was mentioned as a reason for leaving Austria (VII); “most people stay in Austria […] if you find yourself in this situation, you somehow accept it” (II). Interviewees requested limited working hours (not more than 40 hours per week) enabling a private life, flat hierarchies, working relationships in a good team and good learning conditions (V).

Discussion: It has been shown that vocational emigration has increased over the past years due to various institutional developments, for example the implementation of ius migrandi. However, data for emigration from Austria are still not centrally collected. Yet indirectly an increase of 73% of Austrian physicians in Germany has been noted (2006 1.438 – 2012 2.491). It is safe to assume that the numbers for Switzerland are similar. Especially the educational system was criticized. These are similar results as in Oberlander 2008. It remains to be seen when countermeasures will be taken in Austria.