

Russian National Research Medical University named after N. I. Pigorov
Second International (VIIth all-Russian) Practical Conference of Students and
Young Scientists

Haass Readings “Hurry to do good deeds!”

Moscow, 7th December 2012

Guest Lecture

Diversity and Intercultural Competence in Medicine

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Abstract

In very large countries – for example Russia or India or the United States - which look back on a past of great ethnic, national, religious, and socio-cultural diversity and whose societies are still marked by it, it may be superfluous to define the concept of diversity or to underline its importance. Physicians constantly dealing with a heterogeneous population coming from many different areas within the same nation, are certainly used to communicating with patients and to treating them appropriately in spite of possible misunderstandings based on different backgrounds. However, the combination of diversity, intercultural competence and medicine still requires a closer look and special attention. There is a great deal of research on this subject in some countries, because scholars in social sciences and in medicine believe that the dimension of diversity was / is generally neglected in the curriculum of the study of medicine. In this lecture, I shall, in a first step, speak about the concept of diversity as it is used in social sciences. In a second step, I shall define and have a critical look at the concept of intercultural competence in the light of its possible implementation and assessment. The third step, finally, will be a brief overview of diversity-based approaches in medicine. In this context, I shall highlight some aspects of the module “Building up intercultural competence of young doctors: A theory-based module in a practical setting”. This is part of the overall pilot project “PJ-STArT-Block” (<http://www.pjstartblock.uni-koeln.de/11482.html?&L=0>), which we have been implementing and evaluating since 2010 at the Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Human Sciences of the University of Cologne, as part of the university’s program of innovation in higher education curricula.

Selected references:

Allemann-Ghionda, Cristina/Hallal, Houda (2011): Interkulturalität, Gesundheit und Medizin. In: Allemann-Ghionda, Cristina / Bukow, Wolf-Dietrich (Eds.): Orte der Diversität: Formate, Arrangements und Inszenierungen. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, p. 173-190.

Van Dalen, Jan (2009): In the News! An opinion. „Wat kann ik voor u doen?“ Towards Culturally Competent Communication. *Education for Health, Vol. 22, Issue 2, 2009.*