

7. European Health Forum Gastein 2004 „Global Challenges for Our Health European Approaches and Responsibilities“



Mentally Healthy People Take More Precautions Already in Childhood

Lunch Session: Encouragement of Social Integration, Reduction of Discrimination and Improvement of Health: Social, Economic and Health Advantages

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Even though the cost of treatment for mental diseases is twice as high as the one for AIDS, existing preventive measures are considerably poor, not only in the new EU-countries. 2600 suicides per day world-wide speak for itself. However, an investment of one thousand US-dollars in a respective and timely support for children of either affected or endangered people would generate a long-term economic benefit of seven thousand dollars, says Eva Jané-Llopis, head of the Department for Science and Politics of the Centre for Preventive Research in the Netherlands.

Mental Health: Taking Precautions already in Childhood

Looking after mentally ill women already during their pregnancy and accompanying their children professionally during their childhood and school years would give children from families with acute or latent mental diseases a better education, stronger self-confidence and more satisfaction in their lives. Globally, 40 percent of all depressions could be reduced through such preventive measures, stresses Eva Jané-Llopis, but also the susceptibility to alcohol addiction as well as the crime rate. 60 percent of all acts of violence in Great Britain can be attributed to the consumption of alcohol. An increased awareness in public relations, qualified personnel and better conditions for the local support of families, as well as investments in the improvement of workplace conditions would be milestones on the way to achieving this goal, says Jané-Llopis. The problems of alcoholism, though, could be fought with other means: According to a projection, a ten-percent-tax on all alcohol products in Europe would help the health system to save five billion Euro, and at the same time generate a billion more in revenues.

Rheumatism, Arthritis and Back Pains No. 1 Reasons for Early Retirement

The susceptibility to mental problems is equally high when people are afflicted with rheumatism, arthritis, osteoporosis and pains of the musculoskeletal system. Every fourth adult is affected, 60 percent of all early retirements are due to it. The inclusion

of those concerned, an intricate network and financial resources for the education of those who are affected, but even more so of those who are not, are indispensable. "We do not want treatment of the symptoms, but effective prevention" says David McDaid of the London School of Economics and Political Science