

SHORT COMMUNICATION**An Italian View**

The development of clinical pharmacology in Italy and its impact on health care is far from the level achieved in other European countries¹. In the field of paediatric clinical pharmacology, no formal training has been established. Thus harmonised initiatives for improving training and research of paediatric clinical pharmacology in Europe are welcome. The European Network for Drug Investigation in Children² could play a major role in this area, either alone or together with other European scientific societies and organisations.

The majority of children's health needs are in the community. Most child-parent contacts with health professionals occur in primary care, making this the natural laboratory of clinical practice and research³. Furthermore, this setting is the core of a health system because any investment in primary health care is forwarded to the whole population and not only to a single patient, parent or physician. The effectiveness, efficacy and safety of paediatric care should therefore be assessed, guaranteed and taught in primary care as well as in hospitals⁴. Ideally a training programme should be problem oriented more than drug oriented. Principles of clinical epidemiology and public health should be

included as well. Assessing health priorities (and consequently decisions) in the paediatric area, where the burden of diseases has to be balanced with rare diseases and orphan patients, is important.

Research networks have already been created in general practice; they work and are ready for full development⁵. It is to be hoped that paediatric clinical pharmacology can contribute to health promotion development in Europe⁶.

Maurizio Bonati (Milan, Italy)

References

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