

**EuTEACH :**  
**EUROPEAN TRAINING IN EFFECTIVE**  
**ADOLESCENT CARE AND HEALTH**

*[www.euteach.com](http://www.euteach.com)*

**AN INITIATIVE OF THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY UNIT FOR ADOLESCENT HEALTH,**  
**UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER, LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND**

***PROF. P.-A. MICHAUD, COORDINATOR***

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**The original EuTEACH team :**

Istvan Batar (Hungary) ; K. Berg-Kelly (Sweden) ; J.-P. Bourguignon (Belgium) ; V. Chandra-Mouli, (WHO) ; H. Fonseca (Portugal) ; W.R. Horn (Germany) ; A. Macfarlane (U.K.) ; P.-A. Michaud (Switzerland) ; F. Narring (Switzerland) ; K. Pagava (Georgia) ; S.-C. Renteria (Switzerland) ; S. Stronski (Switzerland) ; J.C. Suris (Switzerland) ; R. Viner (U.K.)

**The current composition of the EuTEACH team :**

A.-E. Ambresin (Switzerland); V. Baltag (WHO); K. Boisen (Denmark); V. Bregnballe (Sweden); V. Chandra-Mouli, (WHO) ; F. Dominé (Belgium); H. Fonseca (Portugal) ; E. Godeau (France); P. Jakobsson Kruse, (Sweden); J. McDonagh (United Kingdom); A. Meynard (Switzerland) ; P.-A. Michaud (Switzerland) ; S. Sargsyans (Armenia); B. Stier (Germany); S. Stronski (Switzerland) ; Y. Takeuchi (Switzerland); R. Viner (United Kingdom).

**Invited members**

L. H. Bearinger (USA); M. Resnick (USA)

## SUMMARY

### I. Background

The adolescent age group (young people aged 10 to 19), despite being considered a healthy age group, faces a variety of threats to health, whose origins lie increasingly in psycho-social and environmental problems as compared to traditional infectious and somatic diseases alone. In addition, due to the increasing survival of young people with diseases that were formerly lethal, the prevalence of chronic diseases in adolescents has increased significantly. Little work has yet been done in a European context to prepare health care providers and professionals working with adolescents to meet these emerging health needs. In order to address this challenge, the Interdisciplinary Division for Adolescent Health<sup>1</sup> from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland initiated in 1999 a program addressing the issue of training in the field. Euteach gathers a selection of leaders from several European countries working in the field of adolescent health and illness and who work on the Euteach program. Despite the fact that Euteach is lead by European professionals, it is actually accessible and used worldwide.

### II. The intended purpose of the EuTEACH program

The major goal of the initiative is to contribute to the improvement of adolescent health in Europe (and other parts of the world), with three specific objectives:

- A. To enable European health professionals involved in the care of adolescents to adequately address adolescent health needs taking into consideration the context of the adolescent patient, as well as the crucial role of health education and prevention in this age group.
- B. To set quality standards for medical education, for adolescent health care, and for public health, advocacy and policy making as applied to young adolescents.
- C. To enable health care professionals to effectively collaborate with families, schools and communities, to take a leadership role in tailoring the delivery of health services and to assume responsibility for an advocacy role in relation to the promotion of adolescent health.

### III. Activities

1. Maintenance of a large website ([www.euteach.com](http://www.euteach.com)) providing, for free, to all interested professionals, a comprehensive training package, consisting of 24 separate modules addressing a whole range of issues related to adolescent health and development. The website also provides teaching tools and techniques, with slides, videos and suggestions as how to develop, implement and evaluate training courses
2. Euteach organizes nearly every year in July, with the support of the Lausanne university, an international one-week summer school in adolescent health and medicine which attracts around 25 skilled participants from 12-15 different countries. This course has been very well assessed over the years.
3. The Euteach experts provide their expertise as consultants for various governmental, UN agencies and NGO's in the field of adolescent health, with a focus on teaching activities and development of adolescent friendly health units. They also run national or regional training courses at the request of governmental agencies and other stakeholders, e.g. in Russia, Armenia, Georgia, Moldavia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Madagascar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Division Interdisciplinaire de Santé des Adolescents, Centre hospitalier universitaire Vaudois, 1011 Lausanne, Switzerland, TEL (+21) 314 37 60 FAX (+21) 314 37 69 ; e-mail : [umsa@chuv.ch](mailto:umsa@chuv.ch). Website : [www.umsa.ch](http://www.umsa.ch)

## Background of the project

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines adolescence as the 10-19-year age group and ‘youth’ as the 15-24-year age group<sup>1,2</sup>. These two overlapping age groups are combined in the category of ‘young people’, covering the age range 10-24 years. In this document, we will interchangeably use the words ‘adolescents’ and ‘young people’, as the categories are arbitrary and the health problems faced are similar. Indeed, adolescence is better viewed as a flexible life phase rather than a fixed time period. In most cultures and individuals, it begins with the appearance of puberty and ends with a transition to greater emotional and social autonomy.

Young people aged 10 to 24 years represent a large part of the population, especially in low- and middle-income countries in which they will form about 1.5 billions of people by 2050<sup>3,5</sup>. In industrialised countries, major causes of morbidity and mortality in the adolescent age group have shifted from those caused by pure infectious and somatic diseases to psycho-social and environmental problems<sup>6,7</sup>. The health risks and problems young people are facing, such as depression and suicide, accidents, violence, sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancies, substance abuse, obesity and eating disorders, despite being - at least partially- preventable through adequate health education and health promotion, are poorly targeted by European health care systems<sup>8</sup>. A further factor is that, due to the dramatic improvement of medical technology in the treatment of diseases formerly lethal during childhood, the prevalence of chronic conditions in adolescents has increased significantly, calling for an innovative, multidisciplinary, community-based, family-centred approach<sup>9,10</sup>.

In the US, Canada and Australia, the lack of adequate confidential health services for youth and the deficiencies in provider training have been well recognised. Specific intervention strategies and services are being developed and refined in those countries, including a multidisciplinary training for medical and non-medical professionals which takes into consideration the bio-psycho-social context of youth together with emerging issues such as poverty and ethnic/cultural differences. This trend has been slower in Europe and other parts of the world<sup>11</sup>. Recognising the lack of adequate training opportunities in this region of the world, as well as the lack of a European educational forum in adolescent health, the Multidisciplinary Unit for Adolescent Health of the University Hospital of Lausanne, Switzerland initiated in 1999 a working party with selected leaders in adolescent health and medicine from university and community settings from eleven European countries. What was at the beginning an informal encounter ended up to become a whole program, whose main aim is ***to contribute to the improvement of adolescent health and well-being in Europe by developing an appropriate training curriculum*** with three specific objectives<sup>12</sup>:

- A. To enable European health professionals involved in the care of adolescents to adequately address adolescent health needs taking into consideration the context of the adolescent

patient, as well as the crucial role of health education and prevention in this age group.

- B. To set quality standards for medical education, for adolescent health care, and for public health, advocacy and policy making as applied to young adolescents.
- C. To enable health care professionals to effectively collaborate with families, schools and communities, to take a leadership role in tailoring the delivery of health services and to assume responsibility for an advocacy role in relation to the promotion of adolescent health.

The Euteach group of experts recognises that adolescent health depends on many different factors and that improving the training of health care providers is only one of many possible approaches in the promotion of adolescent health. An essential premise of the Euteach project is that adolescent health care goes beyond simply providing care to ill adolescents, but also includes promoting and safeguarding the bio-psycho-social development and health of well adolescents, and by elaborating the principles for working with adolescents that are useful in the training of all professionals involved with youth<sup>13</sup>. Thus, over the years, the content of the program has also put more and more emphasis on prevention, health promotion, the development of sound policies which contribute to creating safe and secure environment for young people<sup>8</sup>. It also stresses the important of advocating for adolescent health and of respecting ethical principles in the care of young people<sup>14,15</sup>.

### **The content and structure of Euteach website**

The Euteach website has been developed and is still regularly updated by an international group of experts from several European countries, including physicians working in various disciplines, and in collaboration with professionals from other fields (nursing, psychology). The website is composed of different sections which each contribute to the main goal of the programme that is providing guidance in how to teach adolescent health and development:

1. **Teaching Methodology :** A set of teaching methodologies, which outline some of the basic ingredients of modern education and how to organise training session using effective, interactive pedagogic intervention and techniques.
2. **A curriculum**, which provides a comprehensive set of 24 teaching modules; each module proposes, in an integrated format, teaching objectives, methods and practical examples as how to train professionals in various areas, including a set of references readily available on the web. The curriculum has three parts: 1) general issues that form the foundation of care and management of adolescents 2) specific health topics; 3) public health themes dedicated to the organisation of adequate health care structures. A last module offers an example of how to set-up and deliver a “training of trainers” course on effective teaching adolescent medicine & health.

### A. BASIC THEMES

- 1) Definition of adolescence and bio-psychosocial development during adolescence
- 2) The family : influences and dynamics
- 3) Setting, communication and clinical skills, multidisciplinary working & networking
- 4) Confidentiality, consent, rights, access and personal advocacy
- 5) Context and impact : socio-economic, cultural, ethnic and gender issues
- 6) Resources, resilience, exploratory and risk behaviours
- 7) Addressing ethical issues in clinical care and public health

### B. SPECIFIC THEMES

- 1) Growth and puberty
- 2) Nutrition, exercise and obesity
- 3) Sexual and reproductive health
- 4) Common medical conditions of adolescence
- 5) Chronic conditions
- 6) Mental health
- 7) Eating disorders
- 8) Substance use and misuse
- 9) Injuries and violence, including accidents, self-harm, abuse, etc.
- 10) Chronic pain in adolescent
- 11) Adolescents, internet and ICTs

### C. PUBLIC HEALTH THEMES

- 1) Overview of adolescent health : epidemiology and priorities
- 2) Public health as applied to young people aged 10 to 19 years
- 3) Advocacy for the health of young people aged 10 to 19 years
- 4) Health education and promotion, including school health
- 5) Youth friendly health services

### D. TEACHING

- 1) Training of trainers course

The curriculum is designed to be adaptable to the specific needs of professionals from different fields and disciplines. Each module can be used for shorter (3 hours) or longer (1 to 3 days) duration, depending on the needs of the learners.

- 3. A collection of teaching resources**, which provide a set of slides and videos which can be used or inspire professionals who have teaching responsibilities.
- 4. A trainer support part**, which displays some example of teaching interventions that members from the Euteach experts group have run in the past, in various countries and for various audiences. *Professionals in charge of teaching responsibilities in the field of adolescent health and development can either be assisted and supported in the development of their own training sessions or curriculum, or can invite Euteach experts to deliver training sessions in their own country.* This can be done in several languages, that is: English, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian and Swedish. The sessions can be delivered in various formats, including a formal TOT (training of trainers) which focuses in-depth on various teaching strategies.

**The annual Euteach summer school**, taking place nearly every year during the second week of July at Lausanne University, is one of the seminal, world-wide known activities of Euteach. The summer school usually gathers around 25 participants from 10-15 different countries and aims at improving the quality of health care and preventive services delivered to adolescents, using the best available evidence develop more effective skills for adolescent health teaching and advocacy. It is directed to meet the needs of experienced health professionals working with young people aged 10 to 19, such as those with current or future teaching responsibilities, professionals involved in public health, policy making and advocacy for young people.

**Other courses** have taken place for diverse audiences and countries, with various objectives and a range of length: Training of trainers courses (TOT) of 4-5 days have taken place in St.-Petersburg, Tbilisi and Riyadh. Training courses of one to several days have been facilitated by Euteach specialists in Armenia, Madagascar, Egypt, Kosovo, Moldavia and Bosnia, to cite the most relevant. Short half-day sessions are often provided during the annual meeting of IAAH-Europe or other congresses (e.g. IAAH world congress, meetings in Switzerland, Germany, Portugal, etc.). Euteach members are also asked to advise colleagues who want to set up a training session or curriculum on the format and content of their project. In many instances, such courses have been run under the auspices or with the support of UN agencies, such as UNICEF, UNFPA or the World Health Organization.

## **Current structure and organisation of the EuTEACH Network**

The Euteach programme is run by of a *working group*, whose addresses can be found on the website, in collaboration with consultants whose expertise can be requested if needed. Interested European and other international professional associations and organisations are linked to the network with designated representatives. This reflects the multidisciplinary nature of adolescent health.

Collaboration is established with supra-national organisations such as the International Association of Adolescent Health (IAAH), the US-based Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA) as well as the European Academy of Paediatrics (EAP).

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