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Certification of medical specialists in pharmacology and toxicology by the European Certified Pharmacologists (EuCP) Programme
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Background: The LifeTrain framework [1], part of the EU’s Innovative Medicines Initiative’s [2] training and education network EMTAIN [3], has been founded in order to promote projects of continuous professional development (CPD) in all areas of medicines research, from basic science through clinical development to pharmacovigilance, recognising the importance of life-long learning in the biomedical sciences. The EuCP Programme [4] is a joint initiative by EPHAR, the Federation of European Pharmacological Societies, and EACPT, the European Association for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, to identify individuals working in the field of pharmacology whose practical skills, experiences and especially knowledge cover the entire breadth of the discipline.

Methods: EACPT and EPHAR have called on their national member societies of to establish certification schemes according to the EuCP Programme. Upon accreditation by the EuCP Committee, these societies shall invite individual members fulfilling the EuCP criteria to apply for certification. Following a positive evaluation, the society submits a summary of the evaluation to the EPHAR/EACPT EuCP Committee, which, following a final review, issues the certification for a period of five years. Re-certification requires documented CPD activities as specified in the national EuCP programme.

Results: APHAR has set up the first national scheme accredited with the EuCP Programme, based on the Austrian Medical Association’s diploma for specialists in pharmacology and toxicology. Pharmacologists holding this diploma may apply for certification, supporting their application with documents as suggested in the APHAR guidelines for EuCP certification [5]. The EuCP Commission of EACPT and EPHAR has recently approved the first Austrian pharmacologists who have applied for certification.

Discussion: The EuCP certification guarantees a Europe-wide common high standard and qualifies certified individuals for tasks and positions where an extensive knowledge of the entire discipline is required, such as in academic or industrial executive positions, in medical and scientific steering boards, for decision-making and advisory functions in the public health system, in public agencies or in industry. Certification programs for clinical pharmacologists and for pharmacologists with a non-medical background are in preparation.

Links
1. http://www.lifetrain.eu
5. http://www.aphar.at/eucp

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