

Field Report Florence Meeting Bern/Winterthur

18.-22. April 2017

Bern Fachhochschule in collaboration with ZHAW and FH Ostschweiz, Bern and Winterthur, Switzerland

Students and Staff, Bachelor Midwifery and Nursing, various study years

The conference of the 25th Florence Network Annual Meeting took place from Tuesday 18th April – Saturday 22th April 2017 in Switzerland. We spent four days in Bern at the University of Applied Sciences and one day in Winterthur, in cooperation with the Zurich University of Applied Sciences and the University of Applied Sciences St. Gallen. The conference theme was “Mental Health: Global Challenge – Local Actions”. During the week, the differences between the health care systems of the participating countries and especially those regarding mental health care were discussed. Keynote speakers talked about mental health and various workshops on different aspects of mental health were offered.

The WHO defined 2017 Mental Health as “a state of well-being”. But what does that mean?

Mental Health in Midwifery

Due to the vulnerability of the perinatal period, a lot of women and men suffer from mental illnesses during this stage of life. That is why the midwifery workshops and keynote speeches of the FNAM were mainly about the topic of perinatal and above all postnatal depression and its treatment. According to Anke Berger’s presentation, 18% of Swiss pregnant women and 19% of new mothers suffer from a mental disorder. Although this is a high percentage, only 50% of these women are detected and can be treated.

The treatment itself is a big challenge as psychopharmacological drugs may influence the foetus as well as the composition of breast milk. The “Ita Wegman Mutter-Kind-Haus” offers a home for postnatally depressed women and their babies. Its aim is to avoid separation between the mother and the new-born. Katharina Guldemann, director of the “Mutter-Kind-Haus”, emphasized the importance of a daily structure to re-establish a rhythm. Susanne Knüppel’s study results were presented during the keynote speech. She demonstrated that postpartum depression leads to a collapse of the everyday life due to a lack of daily structure.

An especially vulnerable group of women in respect to mental illnesses are migrant women. This issue was discussed during the workshop “Mamamundo: Birth preparation far from home” that was presented by Doris Wyssmüller and K. Jamaac. Mamamundo is a course for migrant women to prepare them for the rest of their pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period. On the one hand, women receive a lot of information about the perinatal period (nutrition, labour, complications, breastfeeding, health care system, etc.) and on the other hand, they practise body exercises that can be applied during birth. These courses are held by a midwife with the help of a translator.



Elisabeth Kurt talking about perinatal depression

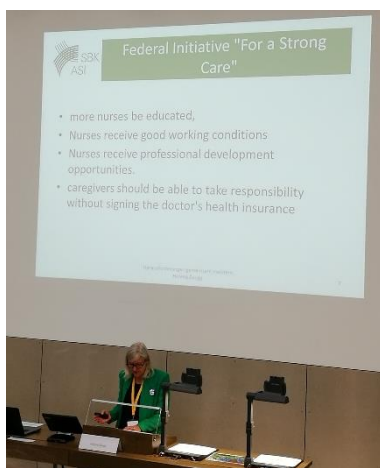
The cause of a perinatal depression is multifactorial. One major factor is exhaustion after birth. Elisabeth Kurt presented her experiences as a freelance midwife in accompanying new mothers and fathers. She pointed out that because of shorter hospital stays after birth in Switzerland, mothers and fathers suffer more often from fatigue and exhaustion. If the woman cannot step out of the vicious cycle (mainly caused by the

exhaustion), she will easily become depressed. It results in a state of imbalance between their care for her baby and self-care. Compared to other European countries, Switzerland has with 14 weeks a short maternity leave and the fathers receive only one day off. Some countries have a parental leave up to a year. Therefore, in Switzerland there is potential to prevent mental health issues by increasing the parental leave period.

Even though midwives are often faced with mental illnesses, there is a lack of knowledge and experience. That is why many depressed women are not detected and do not receive the necessary care. Mental health is an increasingly important issue that should get more attention in practice and research.

Thursday: Home game for ZHAW students

On the third day of the week, the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) was the host of the workshops. In one of the keynote presentations, two Swiss nurses introduced their study about challenging behavior in residents living in nursing homes. One of the main trigger actions for challenging behavior, such as verbally abusive speaking or pushing, spitting or even hitting, is close body contact. This is required in many nursing care tasks, for example during mobilization or personal hygiene care. The researchers found out that implementing Kinaesthetics® during those critical situations could prevent many challenging behavior actions in tested residents. This is a solution-oriented approach that eventually may lead to an increase of the quality of life for residents in nursing homes.



Helena Zaugg, president of the SBK presenting the federal initiative "for a strong care"

After enjoying a delicious lunch from the Pasta-buffet, participants of the annual meeting could attend three different workshops with a variety of topics. For students from all over Europe the workshop "Seeing, hearing, speaking - three wise activities to get wise to Clinical Assessment" was of great interest as Clinical Assessment in many countries is not yet implemented in nursing education. Furthermore, we got into discussions about the role of Advanced Practice Nurses in all the different countries. For example, in the British health care system so-called Nurse Practitioners are able to work independently in their own practices and even prescribe some medication, whereas in Switzerland we are some steps behind. For instance, we lack a regulatory framework to do the same as the British. That is one of the reasons

why the Swiss Nursing Association (SBK) is currently fighting for a new legislative initiative. When the SBK finally gets through with their interests, this will open the doors for a stronger role of Advance Practice Nurses.

Another workshop with the inviting title "The effects of training nurses to foresee and handle patient aggression: Would Florence Nightingale be proud of the evidence?" took place. There we discussed patient aggression in mental health clinics and the history of the nurses' reaction to it. In summary, one could tell: prevention is key! Therefore, scientists developed an effective instrument for assessing the aggression potential from a nurse's point of view. We are sure, Florence Nightingale would have been proud to see so many international students and FLECOs discussing this evidence.

The most interesting part for midwives probably were the obstetric simulations in the skills-lab rooms of the ZHAW with a lot of artificial blood and not so artificial dummies with almost realistic simulations of a baby's heartbeat!

The social program in the evening was a very interesting city tour through the old town of Zurich sponsored by ZHAW. This lovely walk with the possibility for a lot of multicultural mingling was a great way to explore the Swissness.

Students program

The students program started with a workshop with the topic "Nursing and midwifery across Europe – academic & professional differences". The workshop was conducted as "speed-dating" where we had two minutes to discuss different relevant topics in nursing and midwifery. We all received insight into the different work and studying situations in other European countries, could exchange our experiences and talk about our career possibilities.

The food exchange night was the perfect end of a very interesting day where we truly broadened our horizon. All the students from each country were requested to bring typical food from their home country with them. A big buffet with an international mix of good food was the result. Typical Slovenian sausage, real Belgium fries, Spanish ham and Swedish candy are just some of the delicacies we could choose from. And of course, Swiss cheese and chocolate could not be missing.



Food specialties from all over Europe



Buffet at the international food exchange night



Selfmade Chips from Belgium

Study visits

Friday morning was one of the highlights of the week. We had an insight into different health care institutions in Bern. In small groups, we could visit for example SANPO – Bern Rescue service, Engeried Hospital, University Psychiatric Hospital Bern or Dementia Center Schönberg. This study visit not only enables the international students and lecturers to get in touch with a part of the Swiss health care system, but to help for better understanding and to widen one's horizon.

Below are some impression of the delivery room and the maternity ward of the Engeried Hospital:



And some photos below of what's inside of an ambulance:



Election of the new student board

The student board consists out of five nursing and midwifery students from different European countries and schools. There may be two students from the same country. Their main tasks are organising the student program of the coming Florence Network Annual Meeting, publishing the newsletter and supporting the permanent board of the Florence Network in their decisions. They stand up for the students' concerns.

This year the students had to vote for new members of the student board. Three of the five members had to be replaced, as they will graduate this summer. To be elected as a member you had to hold a two minutes speech in front of all the students to convince them to vote for you as a new member of the student board.



There was great interest in the three spots. Among the 13 candidates, there were three from Switzerland who wanted to be part of it. In the end, Loris Uehlinger from the Zurich University of Applied Sciences was elected. Congratulation from all of us for your election, we are sure he will do well.

The new student board: Marie Vandamme (BE), Sina Müller (CH), Loris Uehlinger (CH), Daan van der Stigchel (NL) and Hollie Townley (UK)

Gala dinner

Just like the old saying “saving the best till last”, Friday evening it was time for the annual Gala Dinner in Hotel National in the city centre of Bern. In a beautifully decorated ballroom, all the celebratory dressed participants of the meeting had time to enjoy the great atmosphere and look back on an interesting and informative week. A three-course dinner was the start to a night with dancing and merrymaking.



Swiss group photo

Social Program of Saturday: Thun and the Beatus Caves

Additional to the social program, which we had on Thursday evening in Zurich, on Saturday we had the opportunity to take part in a trip to the beautiful town of Thun and the Beatus Caves. We were lucky with the weather and could follow a guided tour or discover Thun by ourselves. There was also time to have lunch in one of the many beautiful restaurants in the old town of Thun. Afterwards we were brought by a coach close to the Beatus Caves. After a short climbing up you had a stunning view over the lake of Thun and the Swiss alps in the



background. Entering the caves, we could walk around one kilometre into the mountain and observe different constructions of stalactites and stalagmites. The whole cave system is around 14 kilometres and there is still an active part of the cave and that's why it's quite humid inside.

Mental Health is an important topic that effects every one of us on the job or in our daily life. During these days, we learned a lot about the differences of dealing with it in the different countries. We gathered some new information and were shown some strategies to deal with it or to detect a mental health problem. It has been another successful Florence Network Meeting with a lot of interesting key notes and beautiful moments

Fabienne Binkert, Isabel Helfenstein, Melina Matzinger, Lilli Mühlherr, Vera Maria Probst, Susan Schärli, Laura Serra, Andrea Stiefel, Loris Uehlinger