

Post Academic Training Program in Psycho-Oncology

Eelen S. MA¹, Bauwens S. MA², Distelmans W. MD PhD², Hensmans B. MSc³, Schrauwen W MA⁴, Vanderlinden L. MA⁴, Verzelen A. MA⁵, Mathys R. MD¹

1. Cédric Hèle instituut vzw, Minderbroedersgang 12, 2800 Mechelen, Belgium
2. Universitair Ziekenhuis Brussel, Oncology Centre, Laarbeeklaan 101, 1090 Brussel, Belgium
3. Monster.be, Medialaan 28b, 1800 Vilvoorde, Belgium
4. Universitair Ziekenhuis Gent, Oncology Centre, De Pintelaan 185, 9000 Gent, Belgium
5. Universitair Ziekenhuis Leuven, Social Work, Herestraat 49, 3000 Leuven, Belgium
6. The Human Link, Cuperusstraat 24, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium



PURPOSE OF THE CHI

The Cédric Hèle Institute, Flemish* Institute Of Psychosocial Oncology was founded in 2004. One of the main objectives of the institute is to organise and coordinate education and training programs in psycho-oncology.

The realisation of this post academic training, in close cooperation with the Flemish universities, means a breakthrough in the field of psycho-oncology in Belgium.

* the Dutch speaking part of Belgium



The daily board of the institute is a multidisciplinary team of specialised caregivers. They founded a steering committee which had the mission to develop a training program in psycho-oncology. This committee exists of professors from the different Flemish Universities and clinical experts in psycho-oncology.

This committee developed a two year training program (20 days). The first edition was organised at the Free University of Brussels: it started in January of 2006 and ended in December 2007.

This training program is evidence-based. Academic and clinical experts teach their expertise in psycho-oncology. Different didactic methods are used: exercises, role play, video, casuistics, questioning, group supervision, etc. The program has an interactive set up.

The didactic skills of the trainers and the content of the courses are monitored. Same day evaluation is always performed and taken into account.

At the end of the program the students have to make a paper on a relevant subject in psycho-oncology: an extended case study or a scientific research project.

For students with limited experience in psycho-oncology a training on the job is organised, supervised by an expert.



RESULTS

In 2006, the first two-year training program in psycho-oncology in Belgium, for masters in psychology and medical doctors, was launched.

22 clinical psychologists registered. In January 2008 14 trainees graduated.

The overall evaluation of the training program and the evaluation of the specific training aspects, by the trainees were excellent. In October 2008 a new training program will start at the University of Ghent.

CONCLUSION

This innovating training program is an academic specialisation in psycho-oncology, which offers psychologists an evidence based academic training in psycho-oncology. It also helps them to improve their clinical skills in working with cancer patients.

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

The psychologists who followed the program increased their knowledge and their skills in psycho-oncology. They had the opportunity to optimize their communication and clinical skills which will lead to a better care of the cancer patient and his relatives.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

With the training program the Cédric Hèle institute and the Flemish universities want to enforce the link between the academic and the clinical world in psycho-oncology. During the program many academics teach their recent results in scientific research to the students. The psychologists in the program write a paper on a relevant subject in psycho-oncology, which will be published on the website of the institute. These can be a lead for scientists, in search of interesting research projects.



We thank the parents of Cédric for their believe in the institute.
The Cédric Hèle institute could be founded thanks to the support of the national society 'Vlaamse Liga tegen Kanker'

The Cédric Hèle institute
the 'Cellekes' (European Cultural Heritage),
Minderbroedersgang 12, 2800 Mechelen, Belgium

