

Early Childhood Interventions – Raising Awareness in Resident Health Professions

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Summary

Background

Early childhood interventions (“Frühe Hilfen”) support families in stressful life situations during pregnancy and the first three years of a child's life. Active and systematic access via specialists and institutions who are in contact with pregnant women and families with small children is central to get in contact with families. The health sector has a special role to play, as (almost) all families make use of health services during this phase of life. Experience with practical implementation to date has shown that awareness raising especially of resident doctors has not been very successful so far.

Methods

Interviews were conducted with representatives of important professional groups / departments in the medical field (general practitioners, gynaecology, midwives, paediatrics and primary care). In addition, several focus groups with mothers integrated the primary target groups of childhood interventions. Topic-specific networking meetings were held with early childhood interventions coordinators and network managers and feedback was obtained from the project committees of the National Centre for Early Childhood Interventions (NZFH.at).

Results

The daily routine of resident doctors makes it rather difficult to take into account the psychosocial situation of families and to provide the necessary support. Awareness raising can succeed above all if health professions, esp. resident doctors, are addressed in their respective professional communities and are supported with the task to cooperate with early childhood interventions. To this end, further training courses were designed within the framework of the project, and communication guidelines and other supporting materials were developed. The inclusion of families as a

direct target group for early childhood interventions provided important insights and led to adaptations of the existing information material for families.

Conclusion

Raising awareness of health care professions, especially resident doctors, requires on one hand direct contact and on the other hand intensive cooperation with institutions and central contact persons of the respective group. In this respect, the implementation of this project already has an effect with regard to raising awareness. There is great interest in early childhood interventions, but support is required in order to be able to take it on board in daily practice. The dissemination of the activities and materials developed within the framework of the project must take place in particular via the established information channels and forums of the respective specialist areas and occupational groups.

Keywords

Early childhood interventions, awareness raising, resident doctors, further training

The full report is available in German and can be downloaded here:

<https://www.fruehehilfen.at/de/Service/Materialien/Publikationen/Fruehe-HilfenbrSensibilisierung-des-niedergelassenen-medizinischen-Bereichs.htm>