

Educational Research Strategy

**EURACT Council meeting
April 20 – 23, 2005
Lillafüred, Hungary**

Draft 22/4/2005

Euract Educational Research

The aim of the Academy is to foster and maintain high standards of care in European general practice by promoting learning and teaching in general practice/family medicine.

There are many ways to achieve that aim:

- promoting teaching, learning and research in general practice
- providing support and information for Academy teachers
- producing expert reports relevant to the teaching of general practice
- organising conferences, workshops and seminars
- ...
- ...

There is no doubt that Euract has produced numerous important reports on several topics, established databases on Vocational training, and organised workshops. All our statements and reports are based as much as possible on evidence derived from research carried out in the educational settings of general practice.

Our Council meetings are very much organised as working sessions for the different subgroups, trying to produce another report, workshop, or statement.

Several courses are organised under the patronage of Euract. In 2004 the Slovene Family Medicine Society held the first annual meeting of GP/FM teachers more directed at presenting research.

A number of council members have indicated that research should have a place on the agenda too. Some want to present research data on education at Council meetings, others would like to conduct multi-national collaborative educational research projects. The idea of having an open Euract meeting for Euract members has also been expressed.

Reference was made to plans of EGPRN which had set up an Educational Committee, chaired by Frank Dobbs. The Educational Committee was not set up to conduct research on education, but to set up education in research for established GP's but also in the undergraduate and graduate curriculum.

The first question is whether this is an activity within our aim. In our own Euract booklet we state that one of the methods is: *promoting teaching, learning and **research** in general practice*. It doesn't say explicitly that we should present research at our meetings, but on the other hand it would be foolish to conduct research and not to share the results.

Several objectives can be named within the framework of Educational research:

- 1. Stimulate the teaching of research methods in the Basic Medical Education as well as in Vocational Training**
 - 2. Promote research on education**
 - 3. Organise courses on research methods in educational research**
 - 4. Conduct (multi-national) research on education**
 - 5. Present results of educational research**
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- 1. Stimulate the teaching of research methods in the Basic Medical Education as well as in Vocational Training**

We have to include this in the Educational agenda; explore if these programs exist; describe "best practices"; develop materials to be used. Furthermore we should explore collaboration with EGPRN on introducing research methods in the curriculum.

Group: research methods should be part of the curriculum; probably they are mentioned in the educational agenda; Euract together with EGPRN can stimulate that; it is not considered to be a task of the Education Research Strategy Taskforce:

**Action: Job to check Educational Agenda
Job to contact EGPRN**

2. Promote and stimulate research on education in general practice

We should develop a research agenda, meaning we have to explore in which area's research is needed most.

Group: a positive attitude towards educational research is needed and felt. We should find a balance between a structured approach based on an educational research agenda and members own interests. The educational research agenda (a list) should be based on the missing evidence for methods in the Educational Agenda. It was stipulated that gathering and sharing information on a common topic, such as CME, is not to be seen as educational research.

Actions:

- Iuliana (contactperson), Okay, Dolores, and Francesco start with the "education research" agenda.
- Members to send research ideas, or projects to Iuliana

3. Organise courses on research methods in educational research

In this area we could well work together with EGPRN which was already providing courses in research methods for GP's. EGPRN certainly wants to collaborate. One possibility could be the participation of Euract members in the EGPRN research methods courses. Or EGPRN and Euract could set up a common course.

Group: Some argue that if EGPRN is already providing a course in research methods there is no need for Euract to organise such a course. Organising a joint course with EGPRN would be good in the view of collaboration between the Networks, would mean another Euract product, and could mean that in the course specific educational research projects and experts could be included.

Action: Job to contact EGPRN to discuss a joint course.

4. Conduct (multi-national) research on education.

We could learn from the EGPRN experience of multi-national research. Start small and focused. Show results before inviting other members to research.

Group: General agreement that small and focused projects are best to start with. Invite partners from other countries when feasible. Establish working contracts with institutions, departments and practices instead with Euract council members. Projects could run under Euract patronage when council has decided the project fits within the educational research agenda or Euract's interests.

If Euract is a recognized body it could be an official partner certainly in projects with European money.

Action: to find out if Euract can be recognized as an official body is already a task of Wolfgang.

5. Present results on educational research.

General comment: we have to perform research first before we discuss all kind of possibilities for presentations.

➤ **At Euract council meetings**

We could explore if there are possibilities within our Council meeting programme to set aside time for presentations of Educational research or organise Poster sessions. We have to be very careful not to overload our already very busy agenda.

Group: There should be a time slot for presentation of research results. The group is clear about the fact that it is not a presentation of experiences but of performed scientific research. Some suggest that the meeting with the national colleges could be used to present educational research. A 2 hour time slot should be sufficient for 6-8 presentations.

Action: work out and present to council for decision.

➤ **At a national level**

On a national level representatives of Euract and EGPRN could explore the feasibility to organise joint national activities such as meetings and workshops

Group: Regarded as a responsibility of the Council members depending on the national circumstances.

➤ **At an European level**

Frank Dobbs feels that Educational research will not easily become a meeting theme for EGPRN, but we certainly could think about a combined EGPRN- Euract meeting.

One could argue that there are several educational conferences where research can be presented such as AMEE, Ottawa, Wonca. They are certainly big conferences not directed at general practice/family medicine. Furthermore these conferences are often very expensive, whereas the link to Euract is easily lost.

Looking at other possibilities if we really want educational research close to Euract:

- stimulate a yearly research meeting organised by a GP college under the patronage of Euract, like the meeting in Slovenia. The advantage is that it is being organised. On the other hand is it the question if such a meeting is really considered a Euract meeting.
- go for the EGPRN model and organise at least once a year a Euract research meeting together with a Council meeting. Set a theme and invite GP researchers to come to that meeting. We must realise that we cannot spend half a day on research and expect other researchers to come. If we go that direction two days will be needed for research sessions. The advantage could be that more members become involved and feel a benefit. The consequence would be that it is no longer organising a Euract meeting but a Euract congress/workshop, with a completely different financial set-up. Furthermore it would mean that we will spend less time on our topics.

Group:

- **At Wonca meetings all presentations on educational research in general practice to be grouped together.**
- **Establish contact between Euract and AMEE. Get AMEE (again) to observer status ?**
- **Leave existing research for as they are.**

➤ **At an international level**

Make results of educational research, which has been published in peer reviewed journals, available through the Euract website

Proposal for next step:

Installation of a Euract Educational Research Committee which has to work out this first proposal, in good collaboration with EGPRN.

Taskgroup Education Research Strategy: Janko; Mario; Smiljica; Dolores; Francesco; Wolfgang; Roar: Okay; Mladenka; Iuliana; Adam; Job

Action:

- **Job will adjust the document and distribute it**
- **Job will set up a time table for the actions**
- **Job will prepare concrete proposals for next council meeting**

Comments:

Make a description of the task of the group, the end results, the duration of the taskgroup,
Research methods biomedical research differ from research methods in education research (Bernard)

Council presentations or posters only of research by council members or of all Euract members

We need to know what is going on in other countries in the field of education research; how to set up an intelligence system.

Propose Education Research as a topic for Kranjska Gora in 2006

Job FM Metsemakers

I acknowledge the contributions of Francesco Carelli to this paper.