

Training Health Care Providers in Environmental Health - an overview and a perspective from Germany

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Germany

Training courses for

■ Nurses and medical assistants

- specialized for pediatrician's office, children's hospital and rehabilitation centre a.o., specialized nurses

■ Medical doctors

- in general
- Pediatricians

■ other professions ?



Environmental Medicine

- **1987 founding of first medical environmental NGO in Germany: "Ökologischer Ärztebund" (Ecological Physicians Society)**
- **1992 Curriculum "Environmental Medicine" adopted by the Federal Medical Association Germany**
- **200 h courses were held in many countries, many by NGOs**
- **after all 4000 attendees with the special title "Environmental Medicine"**
- **2002 no further courses, no title**
- **2006 new Curriculum 120 h only specialization no special title**

Environmental Medicine

- 2006 the start of new courses failed because of less interest
- European Academy of Environmental Medicine is trying to establish an european master of “Environmental Medicine” - with no success until now
- **main problem is financial:**
 - doctors after the courses have no further/special possibility to earn money = practicing environmental medicine is a financial risk for doctors !
 - In most cases medical services in environmental medicine are not allowed to be paid from the public health assurances but only from private assurances or cash. So environmental illness is also a financial risk for the patients! This restricted the motivation of doctors to invest in training courses a. o. to increase their knowledge in environmental health/medicine.

Risk assessment

- Environmental tobacco smoke
- Traffic and other accidents
- Outdoor air pollution
- Asthma and allergies
- Noise
- Behavioural disorders
- see the results of Health and Environmental Surveys



Risk assessment

- **Important factors of childhood**
 - morbidity (asthma)
 - mortality (accidents)
- **To reduce the impact of environmental factors preventive strategies are needed.**



Preventive medicine

- **Improve living conditions**
- **Individual behaviour has to change**
- **Changing behaviours is difficult**
 - information
 - support
- **Child care takers are key persons**

Training program

- **Inform and support child care takers**
- **German health care system provides a unique opportunity to reach most of the families**
- **Regular check-ups for all children from birth until the age of 15 years (U1 to U9 and J1)**
- **> 90% of parents use regular health check ups**

Training program

- **Unique opportunity to reach parents**
- **Limit resources in out patient units**
- **Pediatric nurses as possible source**



Training program

- **Outpatient clinics**
-excellent opportunity for nurses to interact with the parents
- **Information and support of families to change life styles and attitudes**



Certificate for pediatric nurses in primary prevention

- **Certification for paediatric nurses in primary prevention**
- **Started in 2003 with 40 h training course**
- **Now 60 h in 6 days, with one more module (20h) prevention for juvenile patients**
- **Courses are now well accepted**
 - Also there is no possibility to earn money with the prevention directly until now, we've learned that the doctors and their medical assistants are very motivated and willing to pay for the courses (mostly the doctors) because of ?.

Topics

- Sudden infant death
- Breastfeeding
- Accident prevention
- Dental care
- Vaccination
- Food
- Allergy prevention
- Environmental tobacco smoke
- Behavioural disorders



Methods

- **Single talks with parents before or after preventive check-ups**
- **Single talks with teenagers**
- **Group sessions**
- **Adequate information material**
- **Local/regional network of prevention**



Material

- Hands out: information material and relevant addresses for all topics
- Homework: Build up an local/regional network of prevention with all relevant addresses around office/clinic

Netzwerk Kindergesundheit und Umwelt (Hrsg.)



Kind - Umwelt - Gesundheit:
Aktivitäten von
Nichtregierungsorganisationen

mit
Kinderagenda
für Gesundheit und Umwelt 2004
Vorschläge für eine enkeltaugliche Politik

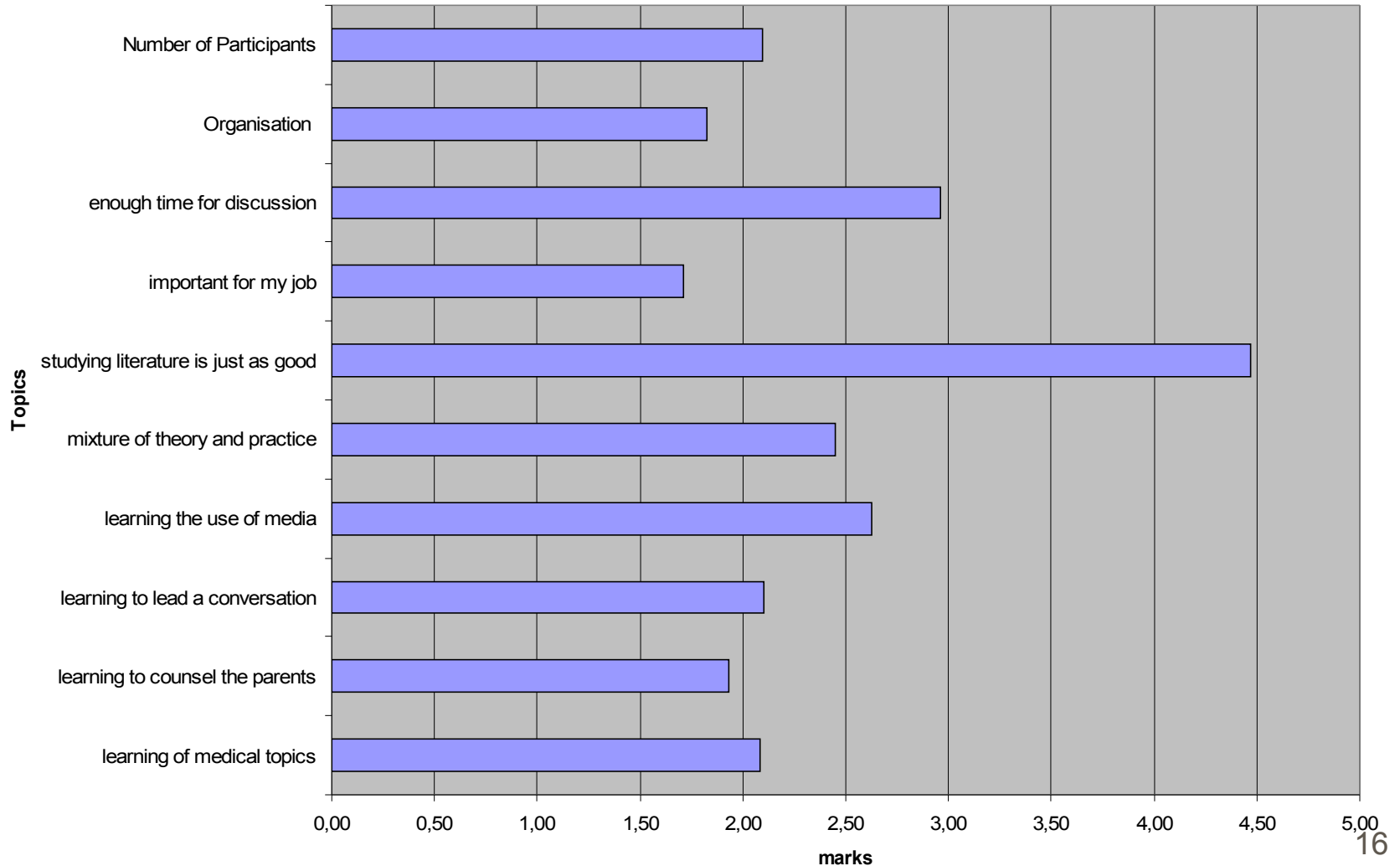
Exercises

- cast the different roles (parents, nurses, medical doctor etc.)
- enter into and carry on a conversation with parents
- lead the conversation to the relevant topics
- reorganizing the office to enable prevention



Primary evaluation after 2/3 of the course (2003-2006)

Valuation afterwards (9 courses 2003-2006)



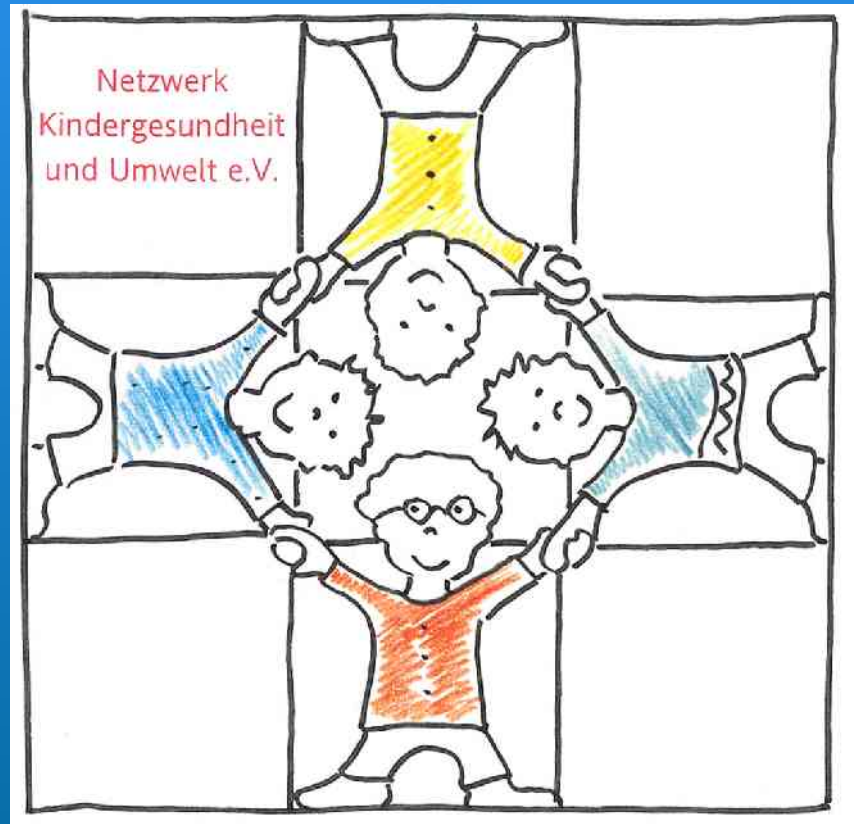
Perspectives

- **Prevention in additional settings: gynaecologists, midwives, kindergarten ...**
- **Prevention for specific target groups: families with lower income, patch-work families, families with migration background ...**



German Network

The German Network for Children's Health and Environment is an informal society of approx. 30 NGOs working in the field of children-health-environment.



Establishing the training courses

The German Network

- works to get a more official certification from the professional medical and nursing associations = in 2007 there is a good chance, that our course become part of the official curriculum from the german federal medical association
- projects the widening to other settings e.g. midwives, Kindergarten or gynaecologists
- runs 3-4 new courses every year, ca. 300 attendees since 2003

German Network for Children's Health and Environment

- The network's aim is to achieve a sustainable environmental health policy in science and politics
www.kinder-agenda.de
- The German Ministry of Health had sponsored the network 2001-2003 as NGO-part of the German Actionplan E & H, since then we've had only some small project fundings within the NEHAP/CEHAPE.

German Network Children's Health and Environment

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