

Press release

GAMIAN-Europe

Regional Seminar 28 – 29 – 30 May 2010 in MOSCOW

The increasing negative portrayal in media of mentally ill contributes strongly to discrimination and stigmatization was one of the conclusions when GAMIAN Europe held its regional seminar.

GAMIAN-Europe is a patient-driven pan-European organization that represents the interests of persons affected by mental illness and advocates for their rights.

GAMIAN Europe annually organizes a regional seminar to give opportunity for exchange and training between patient organizations from several European countries.

This year at this event a number of patients, psychiatrists and journalists from East and West European countries met to debate the role of the media in portraying mental illness. Participants and speakers came from Russia, Lithuania, Estonia, Hungary, Finland, Belgium, Ireland, Israel, Malta and Sweden.

During lectures and workshops both patients and professionals had a very fruitful and interactive exchange of ideas and best practice examples.

Conclusions:

- The increasing negative portrayal in the media of mentally ill people and psychiatry as a whole contributes strongly to discrimination and stigmatization
- Importance of using appropriate and respectful language in media coverage
- Need of collaboration with media to organize training and information sessions for journalists and editors on mental health issues
- Importance of direct contact and involvement of media with patients and professionals to encourage positive portrayals of people with mental health problems
- Importance of developing guidelines for media coverage of mental health subjects which are sensitive to the local social environment.

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