



# UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES

## SECTION OF PSYCHIATRY

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Dr. Shekhar Saxena  
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World Health Organization  
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By email: [saxenas@who.int](mailto:saxenas@who.int)

Dear Dr. Saxena

### **Re: ICD-11: Proposed Reclassification of Dementia**

The Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes (UEMS) aims to study, promote and harmonise the highest level of training of medical specialists, medical practice and health care in Europe. Through its Sections and Boards it has responsibility for European training standards, qualifications, continuing medical education and accreditation.

The UEMS Section of Psychiatry was recently informed of the World Health Organization's (WHO) proposal to transfer all dementia diagnoses from the Mental or Behavioural Disorders section to Diseases of the Nervous System section in ICD-11.

In many countries people suffering from behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD) are treated by old age psychiatrists. They are specifically trained to diagnose and treat BPSD and to care for both the patient and their proxies. The provision of dementia care services requires much more than just making a diagnosis. It requires well-trained professionals and service infrastructure to provide a comprehensive bio-psycho-social management of BPSD. It is the old age psychiatrists who provide leadership in clinical service development, training and research. Population ageing will strongly affect the health care systems in most countries, since older age is associated with high rates of dementia.

The reclassification of dementia would have a highly negative impact on the training of psychiatrists and thereby also on dementia care. As an organisation dedicated to psychiatric training and continuing education the UEMS Section of Psychiatry strongly recommends that dementia diagnoses remain in the Mental or Behavioural Disorders section.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Marc H. M. Hermans  
President

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