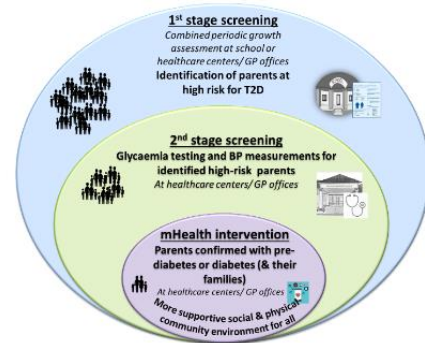


DigiCare4You on track to develop an innovative solution for the early prevention of Type 2 Diabetes and Hypertension

Brussels, 22/05/2023 – At the project’s third consortium meeting on May 8-9 in Zaragoza and online, DigiCare4you partners reviewed the progress achieved in recruiting study participants and developing a locally-adapted intervention, integrated in the local health system and procedures in each country.

What is DigiCare4You?

DigiCare4You aims to improve the early prevention and management of Type 2 Diabetes (T2D) and hypertension (HTN) by firstly, building on an existing procedure for children’s periodic growth assessment to identify people already living with, or at risk, of diabetes and hypertension and secondly, developing a person-centred, community-supported solution, underpinned by digital tools, to prevent the development of these conditions and/or improve their management. The implementation study is conducted in two middle-income countries (Albania and Bulgaria) and two high-income countries (Greece and Spain).



What progress has been achieved to date?

A comprehensive overview of healthcare services in all four implementation countries as well as an in-depth analysis of the barriers and facilitators for the adoption of the DigiCare4You Solution among health workers and end-users has been completed. This paves the way to the development of a fully localised solution in each implementation country – one of the project’s key aims and unique features.

In all countries, procedures have now been established to support recruitment, assess the implementation strategy and ensure statistical power to examine study outcomes. In Greece, 10 health centres and 74 healthcare professionals are now participating in the study. In Albania, 20 schools and four healthcare centres have been enrolled in the study, with 68 healthcare professionals contributing to the implementation. In Bulgaria, 32 schools and 13 GP practices have joined the study, with a total of 51 healthcare professionals supporting the work. In Spain, 15 healthcare centres and 15 schools in Zaragoza are also participating in the study.

One of DigiCare4You's components is the fostering of healthy communities at the local level. To support the exchange of information relating to T2D and HTN and facilitate the development of community-based events and initiatives, a collaboration platform is being further developed, which will be tailored to the needs of each implementation country. Part of this effort also involves creating a supportive social and physical environment in schools, for which a teacher's guide and training sessions have also been developed, while several policy changes will also be promoted.

As described by Yannis Manios, Professor at Department of Nutrition & Dietetics, Harokopio University and DigiCare4You coordinator, "DigiCare4You aims to deliver an intersectoral innovation involving digital tools for the early screening, prevention and management of T2D and HTN. The key to effective prevention is the mobilisation and increased participation of the general population and especially the most vulnerable and underserved groups. Therefore, mobilising the segments of the population with lower health consciousness and health literacy, while it is the most difficult task for any preventive initiative, it is the most crucial and fundamental goal."

A series of digital tools used for the screening and intervention processes have been developed, which allow for the digitalisation of the screening process, the management of diets/lifestyle changes and the monitoring by healthcare professionals of their patients. A decision-support system based on Artificial Intelligence is also under development.

Prof Manios further added, "we are satisfied with the progress made so far and the relatively high participation of families in this initiative. This indicates that the strategies followed so far are in the right direction. However, this needs to be confirmed by the overall progress and effectiveness of our programme during the next two years."

Looking forward to the replicability and transferability of the solution, consortium partners are working on developing tools and a prediction model to calculate the screening and intervention costs; as well as identifying scale-up indicators and adaptation strategies with a view to studying the mechanisms that contribute to the scalability and transferability of the solution and will support future implementation.

Next steps

The study implementation is now in full-flow and early results will be reviewed during the project's next consortium meeting, which will take place in Tirana, Albania, end of November 2023.

ENDS

Additional Information

More than 61 million people live with diabetes in Europe today, the majority of whom with Type 2 diabetes (T2D), a number forecast to increase to 66 million by 2030¹. About one third of people living with diabetes are undiagnosed, placing them at risk of severe, life-threatening complications such as cardio-vascular and renal diseases, blindness and amputations. Although much progress has been made in recent years, notably in terms of treatment availability and options, prevention policies and programmes have remained largely ineffective.





About DigiCare4You

DigiCare4You is a Horizon2020 project, consisting of 16 multidisciplinary consortium partners from Australia, Europe and the USA, seeking to improve the early prevention of Type 2 Diabetes and Hypertension.

Media Relations Contact

Sabine Dupont, Communications Work Package Lead

+353 89 708 65 65

sabine.dupont@idf-europe.org

www.digicare4you.eu

¹ IDF Atlas, 10th Edition, 2021

