



Press Release

Brussels, 13/04/2022

The DigiCare4You project held its annual meeting on March 21-22, 2022. The 16 international and multidisciplinary consortium partners from Australia, Europe and the USA gathered virtually for a two-day meeting to provide updates on the work conducted over the past few months in each of the nine work packages.

What is DigiCare4You?

DigiCare4You aims to improve the early prevention and management of Type 2 Diabetes (T2D) and hypertension (HTN). The project's overall objective is to assess the scalability and transferability of an intersectoral, innovative person-centred solution involving digital tools, aimed at empowering families and integrating community care services in Europe for the prevention and management of T2D and HTN.

How will the project be conducted?

An implementation study will be conducted, targeting more than 10,000 families in two middle-income countries (Albania and Bulgaria) and two high-income countries (Greece and Spain). Schools will be used as an entry point to the community and, building on an existing procedure for children's periodic growth assessment (conducted via school nurses or in collaboration with local community health centres), parents/caregivers will be screened via a non-invasive self-reported digital screening tool.

Those identified at high risk for T2D/HTN will be referred for glycaemia testing and blood pressure (BP) measurements at local community health centres. Parents/caregivers confirmed to have pre-diabetes or diabetes (and possibly high BP) will be invited to join a mHealth self-management intervention coordinated by the community healthcare workforce.

Current State of the project

One year after its launch, and despite complications resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, much progress has been achieved.

Stakeholder engagement and situation analysis:

The main theoretical and practical groundwork for the start of the screening procedure has now been completed. In all four intervention countries, local Stakeholder Advisory Boards (SABs) have been established and focus groups organised to collect data on potential barriers and enablers to the integration of the DigiCare4You solution into daily prevention practice. A comprehensive situation analysis has also been completed recording current policies, legislation, regulatory procedures and services for the prevention and management of T2D and HTN in Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and Spain. Finally, a rapid literature review on mHealth and community-based interventions for the prevention and management of T2D and HTN has been performed to identify best practices and the components required to develop and successfully implement the DigiCare4You intervention in each country.



Adaptation and Screening:

This groundwork allowed for the adaption of the screening procedure to the local context in the four implementation countries. The first stage screening procedures will be implemented through schools in Albania and Bulgaria and through local health centres in Greece and Spain. We are delighted to announce the near completion of the local health centre recruitment process and the start of the first stage screening procedure that will likely start around May/June for Spain and Greece. For Albania and Bulgaria, the screening will start in September when school reopens after the holidays.

Digital tools:

The development of the digital tools for the two-screening procedure is also reaching completion. A web-based platform for the user and implementer will be sent for testing in the four implementation countries during the first weeks of April. The web platform will be tested to assess functionality, effectiveness, usability, and efficacy before its final release. Training sessions for the local health centres that will be using this platform will also be performed in the coming weeks. The DIAWATCH METEDA app for the mHealth intervention and self-management is also being finalised and will be ready for testing in the coming weeks.

Advisory Boards:

An International Stakeholder Advisory Board (ISAB) has been established to provide advice on how to maximise the replicability and scalability of the project's outcomes and tools in other countries in Europe and beyond. The ISAB has gathered for a first introductory session during the annual meeting to get a deeper understanding on the project and its progress. An Ethics Advisory Board (EAB) has also been established and the first meeting will be held soon.

Next Steps

The next few months of the DigiCare4You project will be crucial for its success. The four implementation countries will be focused on:

- recruiting the screening locations (schools and local health centres)
- training nurses and healthcare providers that will be using the digital tools for the screening procedures
- screening families to identify those parents with prediabetes or diabetes
- implementing mHealth interventions

The research consortium partners of the DigiCare4You project will, in the meantime, develop tools to monitor and evaluate these interventions and will assess the cost effectiveness of the solution for its scalability and replicability.

ENDS



About DigiCare4You

More information on the project can be found on www.digicare4you.eu or by contacting:

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