



Press Release

Brussels, 20/12/2022

DigiCare4You consortium members held the project's second annual meeting on November 30/December 01, 2022. The 16 international and multidisciplinary consortium partners from Australia, Europe and the USA met at the Harakopio University in Athens, Greece for the first physical consortium meeting since the beginning of the project to discuss the progress achieved to date. The two-day meeting was an opportunity to provide updates on the work conducted over the past year 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 is the project being conducted?

An implementation study is being conducted, aiming to identify people at risk of T2D/HTN. The study targets more than 10,000 families in two middle-income countries (Albania and Bulgaria) and two high-income countries (Greece and Spain). Schools are being 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 are being screened via a non-invasive self-reported digital screening tool.

Those identified at high risk for T2D/HTN are being 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) are being invited to join an mHealth self-management intervention coordinated by the community healthcare workforce.

Current state of the project

Nearly two years after its launch, and despite complications resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, much progress and major milestones have been achieved. All the preparations to start the screening and intervention process have now been completed. The screening process has started in all four countries and those identified with prediabetes or diabetes are invited to join the 24-month intervention. The intervention aims to improve the early prevention and management of T2D and hypertension through the promotion of a healthy and active lifestyle, using both digital tools and face-to-face counselling sessions. The intervention's implementation and effectiveness will be measured by the evaluation and monitoring tools that have also been developed.



Adaptation of the DigiCare4You solution:

One of DigiCar4You's unique aspects is the local adaptation of the solution by changing the intervention and mHealth tools according to the local context/norms. The first step to adapt the DigiCare4You solution was to conduct a situation analysis. This provided an in-depth analysis of the national health policies in each of the four countries. Surveys with end-users and healthcare professionals to assess their preferences were also conducted as part of the adaptation process.

Digital tools:

The first version of the digital tools to be used for the screening and intervention processes has been completed. These tools allow for the digitalisation of the screening process and allow healthcare providers to monitor the progress of their patients. Applications to manage personalised diet/lifestyle changes (MYDIET) and clinical indices (DIAWATCH) have also been created. Training sessions for the local health centres that will be using the tools and the applications have also been conducted for the research teams of the four implementation countries.

Development of monitoring and evaluation tools:

DigiCare4You's screening and intervention effectiveness will be measured through the impact and outcome evaluation tools at the school and community levels. These tools will also help to replicate and scale the project up in the future. These tools consist, for example, of anthropometric and quality of life indices and clinical measures. In addition, several implementation outcomes will be also regularly monitored, such as participation, adoption, barriers and facilitators of the implementation, by using the relevant tools developed for the process evaluation. All these tools are now ready to be used in the screening process and intervention.

Ethical considerations:

An Ethics Advisory Board has also been established to address any ethical issues that may arise throughout the project and ensure ethics compliance.

Next Steps

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

- Continuing to screen families to identify those parents with prediabetes or diabetes
- Implementing the mHealth self-management intervention and follow-up sessions with the participants
- Fine-tuning and updating the digital tools and mhealth apps according to user feedback

The research consortium partners of the DigiCare4You project will, in the meantime, assess the cost effectiveness of the DigiCare4You solution and further develop the approach for the assessment of its scalability and replicability as well.



About DigiCare4You

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

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