

HAPPY PATIENT project: an update

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Funded by the European Union, HAPPY PATIENT (The Health Alliance for Prudent Prescription and Yield of Antibiotics from a Patient-Centred Perspective) is led by the Catalan Health Institute (ICS) and the IDIAPJGol Research Institute, and it seeks to reduce unnecessary prescription of antibiotics by 40% in five European countries.

To achieve this goal, a total of 406 participants have been participating in several intervention meetings of the HAPPY PATIENT European project on how to use antibiotics more appropriately and how to improve communication skills.

These intervention meetings started in September with a specific “train the trainees” course led by Sara-Anna Davies, María Rodríguez Barragán, Nieves Barragán and Lucías Arias as members of the Spanish Society of Family and Community Medicine (semFYC) and its Working Group Programme on Communication and Health.

Participants of the HAPPY PATIENT training sessions had the opportunity to discuss the results of the first audit. All participants will be able to use the tools experts have developed. Experts from five European countries (Spain, Greece, France, Poland and Lithuania) have participated in a DELPHI study to establish a set of communication tools to achieve the prudent use of antibiotics. The idea is to keep health professionals and patients informed and improve communication. The materials are limited to the work of the HAPPY PATIENT European project, are available in different languages and provide reliable, helpful and contrasted information on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and prescriptions.

The HAPPY PATIENT project aims to reduce the unnecessary prescription of antibiotics in five countries of the European Union which have worrying consumption levels. To achieve this, the consortium is developing various interventions with health professionals with multiple levels of care in the continent where these drugs are prescribed (Primary Care, Primary Care Emergency Services, Nursing Homes and Community Pharmacies).

In this first phase of the project, Lithuania and Spain have contributed the most participants - 105 and 109 respectively. Poland has contributed 80 participants, France has contributed 58 and Greece has contributed 54.

By medical specialties, family doctors or general practitioners have so far contributed 146 participants (almost 40% of the total), community pharmacies have contributed approximately 30% of participants, and, the other levels of care contributing participants have been the emergency services of the first level of care and nursing homes (30%).

The first audit of the HAPPY PATIENT project took place between February and May 2022. Previously, a qualitative study was carried out (September 2021 - February 2022) to develop communication tools. To optimise the results and achieve the objectives, the HAPPY PATIENT consortium used an adaptation of the DELPHI methodology, where a panel of experts prioritised predefined misconceptions regarding the use of antimicrobials. This methodology, which includes feedback and dialogue between the different experts, resulted in the messages to be used in the communication tools developed in HAPPY PATIENT.

The data that HAPPY PATIENT is collecting has already revealed a major part of the challenges European health professionals face when prescribing antibiotics. Therefore, these communication tools try to resolve doubts based on the evidence collected so far. Based on these differences and peculiarities, the University of Copenhagen and the semFYC, together with the rest of the consortium, have been responsible for formatting the communication materials presented to coincide with the European Day for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics (November 2022).

The six HAPPY PATIENT communication materials address the doubts and problems that may exist at different levels of care, from Primary Care to Nursing homes through to Pharmacies, and offer handy knowledge guides specially designed for use by professionals who carry out their activity in each one of these areas.

Keynotes of ongoing activity

- By the end of 2022, interventions were made in three countries. In January 2023, the remaining two interventions were completed.
- Interventions covering the results of the first audit in the four settings in five different countries with feedback and discussion of these results and an intervention in a course-workshop to improve communication taught by two professionals trained by the semFYC Communication and Health Group (training course for trainers carried out during the month of September 2022).
- Preparation of e-learning material with clinical cases, questions and communication videos uploaded on the Moodle E-learning platform.
- Preparation of specific publications based on the results of the first audit.
- Results of antibiotic inappropriateness for each setting in the different countries.
- Preparation of the second audit will start in February 2023.