

NEWSLETTER

Smart Patients- Holistic Empowerment of Citizens to Become Experts in Their Own Health

One of the main EU Health Strategy objective includes „empowering citizens – putting patients at the heart of the system and encouraging them to be involved in managing their own healthcare needs“. Preventive care should therefore not be left alone to doctors and hospitals, also the individual must be empowered and become a „smart patient“. A “smart patient” is someone who takes an active role in his or her health; whereby we follow the definition of the World Health Organisation (WHO) from 1948: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

To become a smart patient has to be learned. The corresponding educational process on which our project is based is empowerment. To this end, it requires a holistic approach that includes, as the WHO definition states, aspects not only from medicine, but also from sociology and psychology. The partnership of the “Smart Patients” project comprises an interdisciplinary team of medical, social and adult education experts, who are keen to meet the requirements of the patients. Smart patients understand their own contribution to recovery as a necessary complement, rather than competition with the achievements of medicine. They also want to lead a life that prevents them becoming a patient. They understand that health cannot be maintained only by medical intervention, but depends also on lifestyle as well as on social and environmental factors.

The goal of the “Smart Patients” project is to empower citizens to develop self-confidence and patients’ competence in interaction with medical experts, to support them in preventing disease and detecting health issues at an early stage and to understand their own contribution to recovery as a necessary complement, rather than compete with the achievements of medicine. The results of the project are internet and mobile application, basic tools with recommendations, tips and guidelines for preventive care, empowerment and participation in the process of healing and accepting a new life perspective.

The European dimension of the project is achieved by the fact that the partnership spans from North-West (Ireland) via South-West (Portugal) via Central Europa to the East (Greece). In a world of globalisation, the project will therefore develop transnational best practice approaches and transfer them into localized solutions in the eight European states of the partnership and beyond. The partnership comprises a multi-disciplinary team of health organisations, education and pedagogic expert partners as well as ICT and multimedia specialists.