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# Innovative practices to care for people with multimorbidity in Europe

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Eastern Finland (UEF), Finland; University of Warwick (UW), UK



# Background

## Multimorbidity

*The occurrence of two or more chronic or long-term conditions within the same person*

(e.g. Bower et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2012)

# Background

- Currently an estimated 50 million people in Europe have multimorbidity and this number will further increase in the next decade.
- Especially among older people ( $\geq 65$ ) multimorbidity is common.
- Comprehensive and long-term care needs of people with multimorbidity result in a pressure on European health care systems in terms of the complexity of treatment and care delivery, manpower and costs.
- The challenge is to reform the way health and social care is delivered to people with multimorbidity, in order to increase its quality and sustainability in the near future.

# Background

## Integrated care

*Integrated care can be defined as patient-centred, proactive and well-coordinated multidisciplinary care, using new technologies to support patients' self-management and improve collaboration between caregivers.*

(Boult et al., 2009)

# The ICARE4EU project

## **Aim**

Contribute to the innovation of care for European citizens with multiple chronic conditions by increasing and disseminating knowledge about potentially effective and efficient patient-centered, multi-disciplinary care approaches, that are developed and implemented in European countries or regions.

## **Methods**

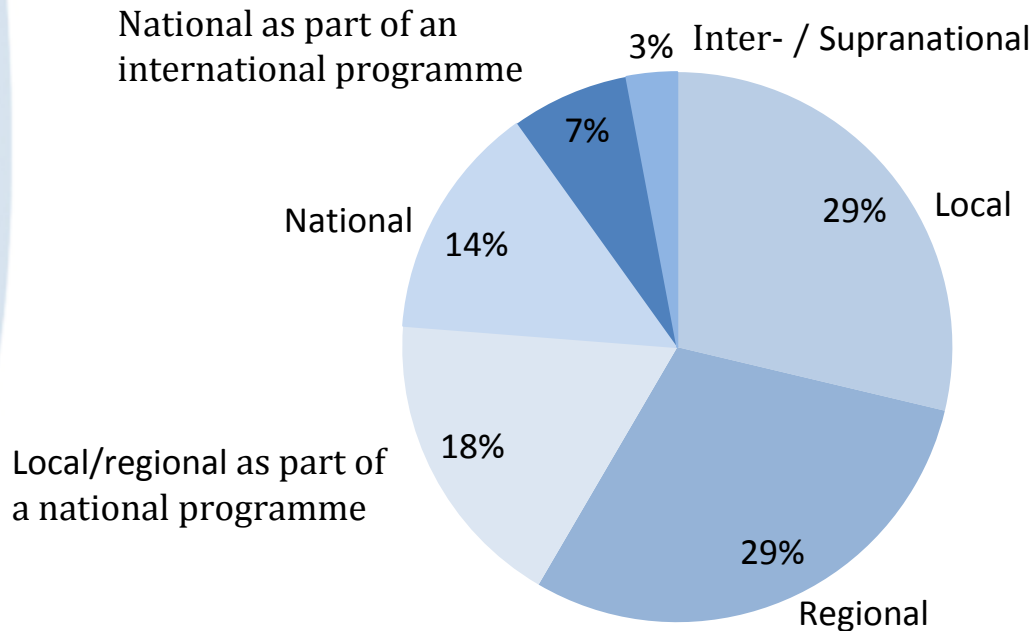
Data on integrated care programmes and policies was collected via country experts: 101 programmes from 25 European countries were selected.

# Policy responses

- Hardly any strategies or policies at a national or regional level directed at (integrated) care for people with multimorbidity have been identified.
- Policies and strategies as reported by the country experts includes three categories, though not mutually exclusive:
  - General policies on care for patients with chronic diseases.  
For instance the chronic disease framework in Ireland.
  - Policies on integrated care.  
For instance the German association for integrated care.
  - Policies with a special focus on care for patients with multimorbidity.  
For instance an initiative from Sweden for a large scale change of health and social care for older adults with complex health conditions.

# Integrated care programmes

The country in which the most programmes were identified is Spain (n=15). The number of identified programmes from other European countries varies between one and nine.



# Characteristics of integrated care programmes

Characteristics		
<b>Most frequently stated objectives</b>		
1. Increase of the level of multi-disciplinary collaboration		80%
2. Improving patient involvement		71%
3. Improving coordination of care		71%
<b>Organizations involved</b>		
1. Primary care practice		70%
2. General hospital		57%
3. University hospital		41%
<b>Care providers involved</b>		
1. General practitioner		81%
2. Medical specialist		66%
3. Specialized / community nurses		53%
<b>Organizational structures</b>		
1. Multi-professional care groups		69%
2. Cooperation between medical and non-medical		57%
3. Multi-professional development groups		55%



# Programme typology: comprehensive versus confined programmes

Characteristics	Comprehensive programmes (n=33)	Confined programmes (n=68)
<b>Focus</b>		
On multimorbidity in general (opposed to a specific combination of diseases)	76%	50%
<b>Objectives</b>		
Improving patient involvement	91%	46%
<b>Target group</b>		
Non-medical care providers	55%	28%
<b>Care providers involved</b>		
Informal carers	64%	16%
<b>Organizations involved</b>		
Patient organization	58%	13%
<b>Organizational structures</b>		
Cooperation between medical and non-medical	85%	43%

# Considerations

- So far health policies of European countries or regions do not seem to have a specific focus on multimorbidity.
- The development of policies and strategies aimed at the organization of integrated care for people with multimorbidity is important, because improvements/changes in the health system can often not be made via innovative practices only.
- In various European countries innovative approaches have been introduced or implemented to deliver integrated care to people with multimorbidity.
- Since there is no template for the most efficient and satisfactory way of providing integrated care for people with multimorbidity, room for experimental initiatives is needed as well as inspired and motivated (health) care providers and organizations that are willing to join forces.

# Next steps

- Management & professional competencies
- Patient-centeredness
- E-Health technologies
- Financing

# Project and contact information

[www.icare4eu.org](http://www.icare4eu.org)

The screenshot shows the homepage of the ICARE4EU project website. The browser address bar displays 'http://www.icare4eu.org/'. The website header includes the ICARE4EU logo, the tagline 'Innovating care for people with multiple chronic conditions in Europe', and accessibility icons (AAA). A navigation menu on the left lists: HOME, PROJECT INFORMATION, PARTNERS, COLLABORATION, NEWS & PUBLICITY, PROJECT REPORTS, CONTACT US, and LOGIN. The main content area features a central text block about the project's goals and funding, and a 'LATEST NEWS' section with two entries: 'Website on-line' (dated MAY 28) and 'Kick-off meeting' (dated MAR 18). A contact email 'icare4eu@nivel.nl' is provided at the bottom right. The footer includes the European Union logo and the text 'Co-funded by the Health Programme of the European Union'.

http://www.icare4eu.org/

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ICARE4EU

Innovating care for people with multiple chronic conditions in Europe

AAA

HOME  
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### ICARE4EU

Innovating care for people with multiple chronic conditions in Europe

The ICARE4EU project wants to improve the care for people suffering from multiple chronic conditions. An estimated 50 million people in Europe suffer from such conditions. The complex health care problems of these patients and their need for continuous and multidisciplinary care poses a great challenge to health systems and social services. But also from a patient perspective, improvements in for instance the organization of care and the level of their own involvement in the care process are important.

ICARE4EU will describe and analyse innovative approaches in multidisciplinary care for people with multiple chronic conditions currently existing in Europe. By disseminating knowledge about effective and innovative solutions, we hope to contribute to an improved design, a wider applicability and more effective implementation of patient-centred multidisciplinary care for people with multimorbidity.

The ICARE4EU project is financially supported by the Health Programme 2008-2013 of the European Commission.

### LATEST NEWS

**MAY 28** Website on-line  
The official launch of this website will take place on June 1st 2013. [Read more](#)

**MAR 18** Kick-off meeting  
On March 18th the ICARE4EU project was officially started. [Read more](#)

contact: [icare4eu@nivel.nl](mailto:icare4eu@nivel.nl)