

Dutch Meeting Centres Support Programme for people with dementia and carers successful in Europe!



The MEETINGDEM project, funded by the EU Joint Programme Neurodegenerative Diseases research, implemented and validated the Dutch Meeting Centres Support Programme (MCSP), developed by VU University medical center (Dept of Psychiatry, research group prof Rose-Marie Dröes,) for community dwelling people with dementia and their family carers successfully in three EU countries (Italy, Poland, United Kingdom). MCSP provides person-centered interventions for people with dementia in a socially integrated environment like general community and senior centers. In addition, they provide, information meetings and discussion groups for their carers, and individual consultations and social activities for both. The main scope of the Meeting Centres programme is to support people in dealing with the changes dementia brings in their lives (Dröes et al., 2004a,b, 2011; Brooker et al., 2017;). The MEETINGDEM study showed that MCSP is transferable across countries, very well accepted by its users, and improves quality of life (increased feelings of belonging, positive affect and self esteem) and mental health for people with dementia and carers (decreased burden) in comparison with usual care in these countries, against reasonable costs. Dissemination of MCSP in Europe and beyond is therefore recommended.

The project was carried out from 2014-2017 by the VU University medical center (project coordinator, Rose-Marie Dröes, professor of psychosocial care in dementia) in the Netherlands, the University of Bologna (led by Prof. Rabih Chattat, MD, psychologist) and the Don Gnocchi Foundation in Milan (lead Dr. Elisabetta Farina, neurologist) in Italy, Wroclaw Medical University (led by prof. Joanna Rymaszewska, psychiatrist) in Poland, and the University of Worcester (led by Prof. Dawn Brooker, clinical psychologist) in the UK.

To stimulate the further dissemination of MCSP and of effective support for community-dwelling people with dementia and their carers an international knowledge exchange network has been set up. This MEETINGDEM-Network will be officially launched by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) at the congress 'BestCare4Dem; sharing effective community-based support in Dementia' on 7 June 2018 in the DeLaMar theatre in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. At this congress which will present an overview of the latest insights in the field of effective care and support for home-dwelling people with dementia and their informal carers, the results of the MEETINGDEM project will be presented in detail.

During the congress various internationally recognised experts (such as prof. Rose-Marie Dröes, Prof. Dawn Brooker (UK), Dr. Machteld Huber (NL), Dr. Elisabetta Farina (I), Prof Joanna Rymaszewska (PL) will present their views on post-diagnostic dementia care. Inspiring parallel sessions will focus on providing the latest information about successful practice, scientific research and policy, and on the international exchange of best practice. In addition to lectures there will be interactive sessions, an exhibition of art works made by people with dementia, an information market, film presentations, live performances and possibilities for networking. The congress will conclude with an impressive dance performance of people with dementia who dance with the former Czech ballet dancer Petr Veleta and professional caregivers from Meeting Centre De Pijp in Amsterdam!

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