

Improving dementia care by interprofessional education

The quality of life of people with dementia is determined by the quality of interpersonal relationships, level of activity and participation, positive mood, absence of behavioural and psychological problems, physical well-being, and living in the community outside of institutions. This is why the management of dementia ideally encompasses multiple approaches, including pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions, caregiver support and environmental modification. Therefore, several professions need to engage in dementia care and coordinate their efforts, including physicians, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and others. However, in many countries there is a lack of dementia-specific knowledge and skills among health and social care professionals, poor cooperation and networking, and absence of services and facilities that are urgently needed by people with dementia and their carers. Supported by the European INTERREG-Danube Transnational Program, a group of dementia experts teamed up with entrepreneurs and policy makers to launch an educational and skill-building intervention that simultaneously addresses all professions involved in dementia care.

The intervention is novel in providing a joint knowledge base and a set of shared values representing a person-centred and holistic approach in dementia care. It is delivered to professionals in a blended-learning format including face-to-face workshops and a multi-media online platform. The educational intervention has been evaluated in pilot activities in four countries.