



Newsletter

January-April 2024



Rome

Giuseppe Liotta,
Department of
Biomedicine and
Prevention Tor Vergata
University hosted RSCN



Graz

Site visit to Graz
University focusing on the
integration of innovative
and participatory
rehabilitation in chronic
disease subjects.



Valladolid

Visit by John Farrell,
RSCN director, to
Valladolid to pick up an
award

Key updates from Thematic Working Groups and their organizations: Integrated Care



Leo Lewis, International Lead at the Bevan Commission

RSCN Thematic Working Groups bring together experts from Government, health and care, research, business, and civic society to:

- identify research gaps to be addressed collaboratively to maximise the impact of research findings
- assess and evaluate good practices and case studies to elicit: the context, learning, outcomes, experiences etc
- support regions and organisations to adapt and adopt innovative solutions,
- spread knowledge and skills coming from previous research and innovation projects, commitments, best practices.

Membership of the Thematic Working Groups is open to any organisation or individual with an expertise or interest in innovation and a life-course approach to active and healthy living.

The « Integrated Care » TWG is focused on evidence-based integrated care support programs to build a staged process of analysis, advice on good practices and peer-to-peer training in care system capacity and capability to build and implement approaches at the operational, organisational and strategic levels. The final goal of such knowledge exchange is to facilitate the implementation of good practices adapting them to local needs and circumstances, in the framework of local scaling-up projects as an integral part of project plans. Knowledge exchange and mutual learning throughout this process will be enhanced by twinning schemes bringing together the TWG experts with the RSCN Reference Sites ecosystems.

Three questions to Leo Lewis, TWG Integrated Care

Which are the pillars around which integrated care should be implemented at operational level?

The Nine Pillars of Integrated Care Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Integer odio mauris, finibus efficitur ultricies vel, sollicitudin nec libero. Pellentesque sed sollicitudin tellus. Sed vitae laoreet sapien, quis laoreet quam. Nullam odio sapien, malesuada a ullamcorper non, tincidunt quis felis. Donec congue rhoncus ex. Nulla hendrerit at urna vitae luctus. Quisque a rutrum augue. Quisque pharetra sagittis velit, sit amet molestie lacus condimentum vitae. Integer blandit feugiat ipsum, vitae aliquet ipsum suscipit et. Interdum et malesuada fames ac ante ipsum primis in faucibus. Ut in tincidunt elit. Nam quis ornare dui. are all applicable at the macro, meso and micro health and care system levels. The importance of identifying the requirements and understanding the starting point for each of the pillars is key to achieving success and improved outcomes. Integration involves planning, commissioning and operational delivery of co-ordinated, joined up and seamless patient flows and services to care and support individuals and family carers to live their best healthy lives. Focusing efforts on a few selected pillars is unlikely to be effective as there will always be ‘missing links’ hampering progress and impact from the good work being undertaken.

You have a broad knowledge of how integrated care is currently being implemented in the EU and beyond : which obstacles are most common in the implementation of innovative approaches for integrated care?

Taking a whole system approach rather than a disease or population specific focus is much more likely to deliver better impact and outcomes. People’s experience of health and care should be one of integration, whether that be acute and episodic or chronic and a continuum. It needs to be seen as an ongoing, flexible journey with incremental steps and associated evaluation to assess progress and adapt steps on the journey as necessary.

What would you recommend to the RS to prioritise in their efforts towards integrated care?

The starting point for the RS is a co-produced integrated care strategy which sets the direction of the system setting out how the whole range of stakeholders can design, develop and deliver more joined-up, preventative, and person-centred health and care for the region’s whole population, and across the life-course. The strategy should challenge the status quo and describe an opportunity to innovate and transform beyond usual services and practices and include the consideration and applicability of the wider determinants of health and wellbeing. The second step will be to develop an action plan based on the nine pillars of integrated care to deliver the strategy.



Featured TWG organization



Site visit to Graz University and to rehabilitation center St Radegund of the Austrian Pension Insurance focusing on the integration of innovative and participatory rehabilitation in cardiacdisease subjects.



Meeting with Department of Scientific Research in Rehabilitation, Medical University Graz and cardiac rehabilitation center St Radegund



Viktoria Stein University of Leiden



Meeting with the clinical head Dr. Andreas Dorr



Regina Roller-Wirnsberger, Medical University of Graz, with Maddalena Illario, Medical University of Naples

Interview with Prof. Regina Roller Wirnsberger, Graz University

Interviewer: Maddalena Illario



Graz University



Regina Roller-Wirnsberger professor in Geriatrics at the University of Graz

Population Ageing is posing several important challenges to our societies, that overcome country boundaries and hence require concerted global policies aimed at implementing sustainable approaches to transform it into an opportunity for sustainable development. Health inequalities, public health emergencies, environmental factors affect high, medium and low income countries, where they hinder the achievement of human full potential.

Which public health challenges do you foresee as priority for your Country and for your Region?

At the moment the Austrian Health Care System works mainly disease oriented and the country starts a transformation towards public health and prevention in a life-course approach. All efforts are framed to embrace digital transformation in parallel. Major challenges address human factors such as population literacy on one hand and health workforce development on the other. All changes also require legal and structural changes. These steps include stakeholders from national, regional and local providers. Running communication to develop a shared understanding of an innovative care approach towards a strong public health system is ongoing.

Graz University has been devoting many efforts towards integrated care, especially in the perspective of preventive interventions. Would you tell us more about it?

The Austrian Health care System is currently highly fragmented, vertically and horizontally. In the past years, MUG has tried to implement horizontal integration for geriatric patients on an evidence base in acute hospital as well as long term care settings. The major focus of our projects is on maturity assessments of health care environments, co-creation of integrated care models and consecutive implementation of models with a focus on sustainability (human resource-based) indicators.

Where are you testing and implementing these innovative approaches in Graz?

Actually we offer our academic support for providers universally. In this context we run projects for different national, regional and local care providers and implement integrated care programmes wherever asked. All projects are followed to ensure sustainability and quality assurance in the follow up daily routine business.

Interview with Martin Skoumal, Graz University

Interviewer: Maddalena Illario



*Martin Skoumal, University Clinic for
Internal Medicine*

Would you tell us about your organization and the innovative services your organization is focusing on?

The Pension insurance is the largest rehabilitation provider in Austria and operates 15 inpatient and 2 outpatient rehabilitation centers. The focus is on maintaining the ability to work and reducing the need for care. For this reason, in addition to the existing conventional rehabilitation services, the former head physician and his team developed a medical occupational rehabilitation program, a rehabilitation program for caregivers and caregiving relatives, a psychocardiological rehabilitation program, a rehabilitation program for Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD) patients, a medical service profile for personalized, participation oriented rehabilitation and a telerehabilitation program. We are currently working on scientific aspects of geriatric rehabilitation in our Department for Scientific Research in Rehabilitation.

Which digital (or other innovative solution) is having the biggest impact on the services you provide?

A functioning electronic rehabilitation information system to illustrate the bio-psycho-social model in the sense of participation-oriented, personalized rehabilitation, including a complex integrated therapy-planning system, is essential for optimal support of the rehabilitation process. In addition to inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services, tele-rehabilitation would be of particular benefit to people who otherwise have no outpatient rehabilitation options close to their home. Telemedicine and other programs supported by artificial intelligence will gradually find their way into rehabilitation. However, it should be noted that face-to-face rehabilitation with highly qualified therapists cannot be replaced by artificial intelligence.

Do you think it would be helpful for you to exchange experiences and knowledge with other EU stakeholders/experts/peers supported by the Reference Site Collaborative Network?

Every exchange with national and international stakeholders is an enrichment and an expansion of innovation for people who are interested in the development of future innovations on the pulse of time . Only through an intensive exchange, the collection of different approaches and opinions is it possible to sharpen the necessary vision for the development of innovative ideas, to discuss these ideas and to implement them in a globally thinking team.

Featured Reference Site: Tor Vergata

Prof. Giuseppe Liotta, on behalf of the «Roma – Tor Vergata » reference site hosted last April 22, at the Community of Sant'Egidio – Viva gli Anziani headquarter, the Executive Board of Reference site Collaborative Network to discuss the activities in social and health services for the elderly and disabled and the commitment to the adoption of innovative and digital solutions to improve sustainability and effectiveness in daily life and in services for the most vulnerable in society, using quality technologies to optimize services, public administration performance and use management that can meet user demands quickly and in a personalized manner, through platforms with an information system at the core of social care services.



The executive board Rscn : Ana Cariazo, Vice Chair, Giuseppe Liotta Board of Directors, John Farrell Director, Maddalena Illario Chair, dr. Chiara Bartoli, Jawad HAJJAM, Board of Directors

Three questions to prof. Giuseppe Liotta

Which is the most compelling challenge your RS is addressing?

A major reform of community care for the elderly is currently being developed in Italy. The reform, described in Law No. 33/2023, is being approved by the State-Regions Conference and involves the social and health sectors in a crucial process of integrating procedures and service delivery. Within this framework, RS Roma-Tor Vergata is experimenting with several innovations to contribute to this key process aimed at updating the care system to the new demographic and epidemiological situation. The challenge is to involve especially the private sector, which is currently the most reluctant to really invest in innovation due to funding uncertainty. In addition, RS is heavily involved at different levels to promote experimental procedures and cultural change of people working in the care sector, which are necessary to accelerate the reform process.



Giuseppe Liotta, Associate Professor of Hygiene and Public Health, Public Health Dept, University of Rome "Tor Vergata"



Poster for the event that took place at the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome

Which is one of the innovative approaches/solutions you are focusing on for adaptation, adoption and scale-up?

Three main approaches are currently being tested

1. Integration of the “Long Live the Elderly!” program with telemonitoring services in order to amplify the prevention of adverse events among frail/pre-frail people living alone.
2. Promotion of “prevention days” for the elderly that include activities based on biopsychosocial frailty assessment followed by in-depth assessment of specific domains of frailty. The main objectives are prevention/management of malnutrition, physical inactivity and falls, polypharmacy and social isolation. All participants are offered to attend short seminars on nutrition and physical activities.
3. Experiment with a model of health and social integration based on health services' use of the active monitoring program and frailty assessment carried out by the “Long Live the Elderly!” as an input for health services that can focus their action on frail people.

What would you recommend to RS facing a similar challenge from your perspective?

We, as a reference site, believe in the leading role of prevention in promoting active and healthy aging at the European level. Our proposal is to promote a prevention week dedicated to active and healthy aging in which all reference sites in Europe can conduct public activities focused on this issue in order to mobilize older adults around prevention and the demand for prevention services from governments.

Events Updates

Highlights: «Women in Global Health Austria» event, Graz April 17th, 2024

The Austrian Chapter of Women in Global Health (WGH) was founded in 2023 by a diverse and multidisciplinary group of women passionate about global health. Hosted by the European Health Forum Gastein, our Chapter aims to create a community of engaged people across the country to jointly work towards achieving gender equality in global health leadership, and specifically for women working in the health sector in Austria. WGH Austria welcomes people of all genders, ages, career levels, and health-related sectors.



A meeting on the occasion of the Women in Global Health Austria 2024

Radical Health Festival Helsinki

21-23 May 2024

Identifying and addressing risk factors before they develop into major health issues, delivering more personalised and efficient care, achieving better outcomes overall, optimising resource allocation and improving the sustainability of our health systems: the future of health and care lies at the intersection of prevention and precision. This is where Radical Health Festival Helsinki is digging deeper this year. It's a paradigm shift that requires vision, leadership, change management and the critical need to be radical. The 2024 programme explores this shift through 3 carefully curated streams of content:

Stream 1: PEOPLE – Placing Humans at the Heart of Digital Transformation

Stream 2: INNOVATION – Accelerating Adoption, Keeping Up with Technology

Stream 3: DATA – Turning Data into Insights for Precision, Prevention and Equity

The event will take place in Helsinki May 21-23. Of particular interest is the session dedicated to DHU on May 21 entitled: "From Successful Innovation Pilot Projects to Adoption and Scale-Up." Digital health innovations continue to proliferate, promising the transformation and improvement of health services. However, only a few flies beyond pilot phases and are effectively adopted. What are the key levers for successful uptake and how can digital health solutions be deployed at a larger scale? These are the questions that we want to address in this participative session organised in collaboration with Digital Health Uptake (DHU) and The European Partnership on transforming health and care systems (THCS). Innovators from all sides will convene to share practical insights and proven tools in scaling up digital health solutions and learn from their peers how to navigate regulatory environments, secure funding and fulfil end-user expectations. Digital Health Uptake organises this practical session to engage with digital health stakeholders and offer the Radar, a good practice repository, and Resources to innovators willing to accelerate digital health deployment in Europe. THCS will share a framework to support the transfer and implementation of practices across the health and care systems. This session is a great opportunity to meet and network with champions across the digital health ecosystem. Equally important is the RSCN session to be held on May 23 entitled: "Turning a Silver Tsunami into a Golden Opportunity. Health relates to individual and environmental determinants, which European health systems have been addressing with a clear and tangible impact on our ageing populations. However, these efforts have not systematically translated into quality of life, independent living and new sustainable development opportunities. Are we doing enough to provide future generations a public health system that will meet the challenges on the horizon? What else can we do collaboratively? As the digital transformation of our health systems keeps accelerating, have we secured a triple win: improved health outcomes, services, and sustainability? Integrating digital solutions into existing services calls for major sociocultural and organizational adjustments as well as a major shift in training and upskilling or reskilling an ageing health workforce. How do we define "health services" vs. "social services" in this new scenario? How do we assess health/social services performance? How do we evolve and evaluate professional education considering the multidimensional and interdisciplinary approaches that concur to promote and protect health? This session will showcase diverse use cases united by one common goal: transforming ageing populations from a challenge into an opportunity for sustainable development through innovative strategies and tools.



John Farrell receiving award in Valladolid

SIVI Cluster 10th Anniversary

Cluster SIVI AHL Reference Site celebrated its 10th anniversary on the 12th April with a special event held at the Miguel Delibes Auditorium, Valladolid, Spain. The event, which was opened by Carlos Martín Tobalina, Vice-Minister of Economy of the Junta de Castilla y León, highlighted the decade of achievements and significant advances, innovation and collaboration that have been made by Cluster SIVI and its multiple collaborators. One of the highlights of the day was the presentation of awards to key figures who have contributed significantly to the advancement and representation of the care sector at a national and international level. John Farrell, RSCN Director, received an award for his work in facilitating health and care service delivery strategies, policies and models in the European Union, thus promoting continuous improvement in the sector. Other award recipients were: M^a Isabel Blanco Llamas, Minister of Family and Equal Opportunities of the Government of Castilla y León, for her work in promoting the consolidation of the SIVI Cluster. as a regional benchmark for innovation in the care sector, as well as for its commitment to promoting equal opportunities and the well-being of society; Antonio Novo Guerrero, President of the European Cluster Alliance (ECA), for his work representing the importance of clusters at the European level, thus strengthening collaboration and exchange of knowledge on the continent; and M^a. Jesús García Martín, Deputy Director General of Industry Digitalization and Collaborative Environments of the Ministry of Industry, recognized for her pioneering work in promoting digital transformation and innovation in the care industry.

Endorsement of EPACT Open Letter on a European Patient Safety Strategy

Patient harm is an urgent public health issue and patient safety is a shared European challenge, pertinent to all EU Member States striving towards building a resilient European Health Union. The RSCN has been collaborating with EHMA in the framework of its EPACT advocacy effort to call upon European policymakers at all levels to take immediate and concerted action to prioritise patient safety as a fundamental principle of the European Health Union. Below the key points of the letter, urging the following:

1. Launch a European Patient Safety Strategy recognising the critical role of patient safety in building a responsive and resilient European Health Union.
2. Allocate dedicated resources for patient safety.
3. Standardise patient safety programs.
4. Foster cultures of safety.
5. Support the healthcare workforce.
6. Promote the digital transition.
7. Establish a comprehensive patient safety investigation framework.

More info available at: <https://ehma.org/projects/epact/>



The RSCN Community congratulates Gabrielle Onorato on her new working adventure, and wishes her all the best!



A memorable day in Bruxelles: Gabrielle Onorato and Maddalena Illario with one of the RSCN inspired Founders and first Chair, prof. Jean Bousquet from Montpellier University



*Dear Gabrielle, it has been an absolute pleasure working with you. Thank you for everything you've done for the RSCN Secretariat: we'll miss you !
Congratulations and all the best with your next working chapter!*