



# Newsletter

## September-October 2024



### Lodz

12th European Health  
Promotion Conference  
IUHPE



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# 12th European Health Promotion Conference IUHPE, Lodz



The speakers' table

On Monday, June 17, the Clinical and Didactic Center of the Medical University of Lodz hosted the prestigious 12th European Health Promotion Conference IUHPE. The two days have allowed worldwide meetings between professionals – researchers, health promotion practitioners, and officials working on health policy and health promotion programs – to strengthen efforts and synergies dedicated to health promotion and salutogenesis. This meeting was an excellent opportunity to exchange experiences, establish contacts, and cooperate with a focus on the theme of “Health Promotion: Shaping Change Across the Lifespan.”

The meeting assessed the current knowledge and practice of health promotion, highlighting future challenges and shaping pathways for progress in the field. The conference will play a significant role in disseminating health promotion research, emphasizing facilitating health transitions at every stage of life.

## Interview with Rector Prof. Wojciech Woźniak, University of Lodz.

### Interviewer: Maddalena Illario



Prof. Woźniak, University of Lodz

**Rector, the 12th European Conference theme is “Health Promotion: shaping change across the life span.” What is the desirable change to prioritize in your region regarding the approach to active and healthy living? Is there any role you foresee in innovations that will strengthen such an approach?**

From my perspective, digitalisation opens up perspectives for developing an inclusive social ecosystem in health promotion. It allows us to build intergenerational bridges between young people, adults, and seniors. Increasing citizens' health and digital literacy will strengthen the potential for better health and well-being and, therefore, quality of life from both local and global perspectives.

**The conference was attended by researchers, public officials, and authorities worldwide. All involved to strengthen capacity in health promotion. These are the moments when good practices and reflections are shared, and the current state of progress is understood. Where do you think we are now?**

The conference was a forum for sharing experiences and learning new perspectives on strengthening well-being considering social, cultural, and historical differences. According to the latest data from the European Innovation Scoreboard, Poland stands out for a very high level of digitisation and use of information technology in various areas, including healthcare. One example is the e-patient internet portal. The platform not only collects health-related data but also plays a role in building health literacy among citizens of all ages. I believe that these types of solutions will help develop national and international projects to provide more evidence that interventions are effective in improving quality of life and economic efficiency.

**What are the possible future scenarios? Can we expect increased investments supporting this paradigmatic shift towards a proactive approach to healthy living?**

The cooperation of interdisciplinary scientific teams, consistently implementing the Medical University of Lodz strategy, enables the development of perspectives for new European projects. Data collection in a short period allows for new and more effective procedures in health care. Local testing of new solutions based on social dialogue gives us access to science based on value-based medicine. I hope the results will impact decision-makers in shaping health policy planning in our country.



Prof. Tomasz Kostka , University of Lodz

**Prof. Kostka, the desired change in health promotion starts precisely from innovative approaches to training, with a focus on interdisciplinarity. What changes in education and training will help healthcare professionals integrate health promotion into current practices?**

The conference aroused great interest not only among the specialists who attended our meeting, but also among other health professionals. I hope this event will accelerate the implementation of new health promotion tools. Together with progress in academic innovation, increasing patients' sense of responsibility for their well-being through the active use of health literacy would strengthen the health of our citizens. This direction should support public health education at our university.

**Are there any good practices your medical school adopted for health promotion towards students and professionals?**

We share and exchange experiences at different levels: academic, local city, and network of cities in our region. We also open up to the local community and create activities based on a bottom-up approach. One good practice is an educational offer for students of the University for Seniors. We offer them various lectures and social events to strengthen their health potential and well-being.

**What do you see as the limitations and challenges facing Europe and the world as a whole in strengthening health promotion in the near future?**

Financial and educational barriers and cultural and historical differences seem to me to be significant barriers to strengthening health potential. However, globalisation and, the exchange of best practices, the mobility of students and young researchers will allow international cooperation to develop solutions that support improving the quality of life in Europe.



From left: Magdalena Kwasniewska, Magdalena Wrzesinska, Tomasz Kostka, Lucyna Wozniaka and Maddalena Illario



To left, Maddalena Illario with Steffen Torp; to the right, Lucyna Wozniaka and Maddalena Illario



# The event, organised by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, provided insights into the potential of new technologies and innovative approaches for better wellbeing and health

On May 28th and 29th, 2024, THCS participated in the conference "The Convergence of Technologies Enabling R&I for the Healthcare of the Future" held in Brussels. The event, organised by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, shed light on the integration of bio and nanotechnologies, engineering, digitalization, and big data in revolutionising healthcare, and the European Union's commitment to funding research in these cutting-edge fields. Gerda Geyer, leader of THCS' Work Package 9, participated in the panel discussion "What is the role of the European partnerships?", together with representatives from DG RTD, EP PerMed, ERA4Health, IHI and several other EU Partnerships. The discussion explored linkages and possible synergies among these initiatives, providing an opportunity to delve deeper into the critical role European partnerships hold in R&I driving healthcare innovation and transformation. For more info, proceeding's recordings and other media, please follow this link: <https://omicsforhealth.eu/media/>



*Work day, THCS*

Link: <https://www.thcspartnership.eu/news/latest-news/thcs-participates-in-the-converging-technologies-towards-healthcare-of-the-future-event.kl>

## Site Visit to Pacentro for NewEcoSmart project



*The work table*

NewEcoSmart aims to create an inclusive social innovation approach to upskill adults aged 45 and above in rural areas, helping them adapt to the green and digital transitions in their current jobs or find new opportunities in habitat-related sectors. This initiative also promotes social entrepreneurial skills and mindsets that support the adoption of circular and socially responsible business models. An opportunity to increase work activities, reduce the migration of young people and develop the territory. The visit of the Italian and Spanish delegation to the villages of the Maiella Community lasted two days. Two days of intense activities to establish which citizens were most suitable and also most in need of learning new green and digital techniques, identifying the critical issues of the territory and trying to develop a concrete growth path in the medium and long term. The project includes training courses on digitalisation and green.



*Discussion on the activities to be carried out*

At least 40 subjects over the age of 45 are required, but this does not mean that other subjects of any age can also participate once it has been ensured that the 40 required subjects are present. 10 "students" per municipality could be involved, divided between Pacentro, Pettorano, Pescocostanzo and Cansano. The aim is to develop and promote the tourism market, strengthening the skills of those trained and involved in activities with high added value for health, adding an offer no longer limited to hotel services, but also other sectors such as nutrition, physical activity, as well as making tourist flows more sedentary and extensive.



*The working group after the welcome dinner*



*Vittorio Riponi, project manager CEIPES, discusses the NewEcoSmart Project*



*Kika Perez, Management of digital projects, innovation, territory and industry 5.0 discusses the NES Hackaton challenge*



*The work table*

# Spotlight on RSCN: Enhancing Healthcare Procurement Across Europe

**Silvia Bossio**



*Team of Procure*

The AHL Reference Sites Collaborative Network (RSCN) plays a pivotal role in the PROCURE project, which unites 25 partners from 12 EU countries to advance public healthcare procurement practices across Europe. Launched earlier this year, the initiative was funded through the EU4Health Programme, with partners comprising a diverse range of public and private healthcare institutions, procurement organisations, and suppliers. The participating Member States include Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Portugal, and Romania. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the necessity for enhanced coordination and collaboration within the healthcare sector at various levels. It revealed significant vulnerabilities in the supply chain, highlighting the need for innovative approaches to healthcare procurement to bolster the resilience of healthcare systems and prepare them for future public health crises. RSCN's Role in PROCURE. As the leader in Dissemination, Communication, Exploitation, and Impact Assessment for the PROCURE project, RSCN is essential in ensuring that the project's objectives are clearly communicated, and its outcomes maximised. Key objectives of RSCN's involvement include:

1. Establishing a Common Communication Approach: Supporting the consortium in reaching defined target audiences to achieve their goals.
2. Raising Awareness: Increasing visibility for the project, its aims, and impacts among various stakeholders and policymakers across different regions.
3. Disseminating Project Results: Showcasing findings and achievements at multiple levels—local, regional, national, European, and international—while organising a Community of Interest Forum and a Final Conference with a European dimension.
4. Ensuring Project Sustainability: Developing strategies for the adoption of recommendations at national or regional levels.

Through its participation in the PROCURE project, RSCN aims to enhance its understanding of healthcare procurement and its critical role in delivering safe, effective services to patients. It plans to actively disseminate the project's recommendations to healthcare providers, policymakers, and procurement organisations within its extensive network of 66 AHA Reference Site regions across Europe. The objective is to ensure that health procurement recommendations defined in the project are widely understood, adopted, and sustained. RSCN seeks to engage decision-makers in incorporating these recommendations into their strategic plans, ultimately fostering more effective and resilient healthcare procurement practices. This will enable regions to respond more effectively to their healthcare needs and better prepare for future emergencies. Running for 18 months, the PROCURE project aims to deliver comprehensive recommendations on future healthcare procurement practices and establish a policy framework for EU healthcare procurement. The findings will be presented to the European Commission and various EU healthcare institutions at a major conference in mid-2025, marking a significant step towards enhancing healthcare procurement across Europe. Web link: <https://www.projectprocure.eu/> LinkedIn link: @projectprocure

# Fostering Personalised Dementia and Frailty Solutions: The COMFORTage Community Forum (CCF)

**Silvia Bossio**

As Europe faces the challenges of an ageing population, the need for innovative solutions to address dementia and frailty has never been more pressing. The COMFORTage project stands out as a pioneering initiative that combines clinical expertise, technological advancements, and community engagement to tackle these issues effectively. Central to this initiative is the COMFORTage Community Forum (CCF), a collaborative network designed to sustain and enhance the project's impact well beyond its formal conclusion.

COMFORTage primarily focuses on predicting, monitoring, and personalising interventions for dementia and frailty. Recent studies, including a 2020 edition of *The Lancet*, have highlighted the worrying increase in dementia prevalence across the EU. This project aims to fill the gaps in dementia care by addressing modifiable risk factors, which account for nearly 40% of dementia cases worldwide. By establishing a pan-European framework for community-based prevention and intervention strategies, COMFORTage promotes effective lifestyle changes that significantly enhance the quality of life for those affected.

The CCF acts as a dynamic network that engages partners, pilot projects, and expert stakeholders interested in dementia, cognitive decline, and digital health technologies. Its primary goal is to promote the sustainability and wider adoption of COMFORTage's outcomes, creating ongoing opportunities for learning, knowledge exchange, and collaboration.

The AHL Reference Sites Collaborative Network (RSCN) is a key partner in the COMFORTage project, tasked with implementing and managing the CCF to improve personalised dementia and frailty care solutions across Europe. The forum aims to facilitate access to innovative insights, align regional health priorities, and ensure the long-term continuity of impact beyond the project's lifespan.

Initially, the CCF will consist of the 39 partners and pilot organisations involved in the COMFORTage project. This foundational group is crucial for the forum's success, while additional stakeholders, including health professionals, policymakers, and researchers, are encouraged to join, fostering a vibrant ecosystem for dialogue and innovation. Membership in the CCF offers numerous benefits, including access to cutting-edge research, support networks, educational opportunities, and influence over research and policy.

The establishment of the CCF will unfold in two phases. The first phase, beginning in October 2024, will focus on forming a core working group of committed stakeholders. This will be followed by a broader outreach phase in February 2025 through an open call for membership, complemented by information webinars and social media updates.

In conclusion, the COMFORTage Community Forum is essential in enhancing dementia and frailty care across Europe. By fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, and driving innovative solutions, the CCF supports the immediate goals of the COMFORTage project while ensuring its long-term relevance in improving the quality of life for those affected. Webpage link: <https://comfortage.eu/>



Team ComfortAge and the project



# RSCN fostering synergies between TeamCare & DIGI4MSK training

The RSCN is involved in the TeamCare project, focused on training health and social care professionals in transversal, soft and digital skills enabling them to work effectively as a team in undertaking effective multidimensional patient assessments and tailoring personalized care plans.

Recently, the RSCN engaged with Digi4MSK team to explore synergies that might strengthen the two Erasmus projects reciprocally. The project “Innovation Alliance for musculoskeletal health literacy in the digital era (Digi4MSK) has the mission of revolutionizing the landscape of musculoskeletal health literacy in the digital age through innovative educational methods and content development.

Both curricula are based on an Integrated Framework of Competences and supported by guidelines to enable implementation in different countries, and share the final ambition of strengthening the connections between scientific knowledge and healthcare practice, fostering multidisciplinary and inter-professional approaches to health service provision. The RSCN will facilitate knowledge exchange between TeamCare and Digi4MSK communities, at the same time supporting the interactions with the EU Reference Sites for further adoption and scale-up of the results of the 2 projects.

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Goodbye John and thank you for all the effort you have put into this project

