



WP 2

Desk- & Field Research Report

Short Version of a Transnational Executive Summary

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Activity of the WP 2 - Analysis of caregiver requirements and needs for early identification, monitoring and management of clients with mental health problems	
Title:	Summarize main results of this WP for dissemination purpose
Description:	Summarize the national desk- and field research reports of all partner nations in to a short version of an Executive Summary
Partner organisation:	Lead partner: UMIT TIROL WP n°2 Leader: UMIT TIROL All other partners responsible for their country reports
Researcher(s) responsible for filling in this document:	Responsible person for the Short Version UMIT TIROL Eva Schulc Responsible for the Translation in their national language UM FHS Majda Pajnkihar & Dominika Vrbnjak Agecare Sotiria Moza & Antonia Tziannarou Assistance University Cypres Christos Mettouris, Marios Kyprianou; Evangelia Vanezi Hafelekar Paul Schober
Due date:	18/12/2023 until August 2024
Language:	National Language (then translation of final version into German and English)



CC BY-NC-ND

This document is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

The EDU-MENT project focuses on improving the psychosocial health of elderly people in long-term care facilities through the introduction and use of digital screening tools for early detection of psychosocial



behavioral changes. This initiative aims to address the growing challenges in elderly care, especially in managing psychological and social changes, and to optimize care quality through innovative approaches and better training for care staff without psychiatric qualifications.

Background and Objectives

The project was launched to meet the increasing care needs of older adults, particularly those with psychosocial and mental health problems. The goal is to recognize and address these issues early, especially in Austria, Slovenia, and Cyprus, where the aging population places a heavy burden on the care system. The project goals include:

Project Goals

- Developing and implementing digital screening tools for early detection of psychosocial problems.
- Training care workers in recognizing and managing psychosocial behavioral changes.
- Promoting interdisciplinary collaboration in long-term care facilities.
- Improving the quality of care through continuous training and practical interventions.
- Practical implementation and evaluation of developed solutions—specifically digital screening tools and training programs.

Key Findings

Desk Research in Austria, Slovenia, and Cyprus

1. **Mental Health in Older Adults:** Mental health plays a central role in the well-being of older adults. In all three countries, common challenges such as depression, dementia, and anxiety disorders are amplified by loneliness and social isolation.
 - **Austria** has a well-established LTC system but struggles with a shortage of specialized personnel and underfunding in the mental health sector. National programs such as the National Suicide Prevention Program aim to address these gaps.

- **Slovenia** also faces a growing elderly population with mental health issues. Despite a strong legal framework and national programs, the integration of psychiatric services into primary care is limited.
- **Cyprus** suffers from a highly family-based care system and a lack of formal care facilities. Inadequate training in dealing with psychosocial issues in older adults remains a significant problem.

2. Risk Factors and Social Impacts:

- Social isolation, chronic illnesses, and financial burdens are common factors in all three countries contributing to the deterioration of mental health in older adults.
- Substance abuse and traumatic experiences (especially in Cyprus due to the 1974 invasion) exacerbate the mental health issues in the elderly population.
- All three countries emphasize the importance of social support and integration to mitigate the impact of these risk factors.

3. **Current Care Structures and Resources:** The care infrastructures in all three countries are under pressure. Access to psychiatric care is better in Austria and Slovenia, while Cyprus lacks formal support networks. In all three countries, there is an urgent need to improve training in mental health care and to introduce standardized screening tools.

Key Findings – Field Research in Austria, Slovenia, and Cyprus

Field research was conducted to understand how care workers in Austria, Slovenia, and Cyprus manage psychosocial behavioral changes in elderly patients. Interviews with 36 care workers revealed the following findings:

1. Current Practices and Challenges:

- In **Austria**, there is no standardized use of digital tools. Care workers rely on direct observation and team communication. The lack of training and tools makes early detection difficult.

- **Slovenian** care workers use cognitive tests, but digital tools are only limitedly used. There is an urgent need for continuous education and digital integration.
 - In **Cyprus**, care workers rely on direct observations without formal tools, leading to less effective care.
2. **Skills and Competencies:** Care workers in all three countries emphasized the need to improve their skills in psychosocial care, including:
- Better interdisciplinary collaboration between care workers, doctors, and psychologists.
 - Ongoing training to manage psychosocial challenges such as aggression, depression, and cognitive decline.
3. **Integration of Digital Tools:**
- There is a clear demand for standardized digital tools that can be easily used by care workers to recognize psychosocial changes. These tools must be user-friendly and adaptable to different care settings in Austria, Slovenia, and Cyprus.
4. **Organizational and Educational Deficits:**
- Austria and Slovenia need more comprehensive educational programs in psychosocial health, while Cyprus must address resource shortages and promote a more structured approach to care.
 - Continuous training and specialized education are required to close the gaps in psychosocial care in all three countries.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. **Development of Standardized Screening Tools (WP 3):** All three countries lack unified tools to detect psychosocial changes. A digital platform should be developed that is user-friendly and adaptable to different institutional needs, allowing early identification of psychosocial problems in older adults.
2. **Implementation of Training Programs (WP 4):** Continuous professional development and interdisciplinary training are necessary to equip care workers with the skills needed to manage

complex psychosocial behaviors. The training should cover both technical aspects of tool usage and social skills such as empathy and communication.

3. **Testing and Implementing Solutions (WP 5):** The digital screening tools and training programs need to be tested and evaluated to ensure their effectiveness. The practical implementation phase will demonstrate how well these innovations can be integrated into the daily operations of care facilities and their impact on improving care quality.

Summary of Improvement Measures:

- **Introduction of digital screening tools** to help detect psychosocial and mental health problems early, enabling care workers to act proactively.
- **Regular training** to equip care workers with the necessary skills to manage psychosocial changes, use digital tools effectively, and foster collaboration within interdisciplinary teams.
- **Interdisciplinary collaboration** to ensure a holistic approach to caring for older patients with complex psychosocial and mental health needs.
- **Continuous monitoring and evaluation** of personalized care plans and screening tools to ensure they are flexible and responsive to patients' needs.