

Herne, 15.09.2015

Joint staff training event

The joint staff training event took place in Herne, Germany with the following context:

First, the trainers were informed by medical experts on current methods of clinical treatment for neck pain and key points for designing therapeutic protocols. Then, the trainers presented and discussed with physicians and physical therapists the contents of health promotion programs with emphasis on those addressing neck pain symptoms. The program in detail of this training event is:

- 1st day: tour around the facilities and discussion about equipment for rehabilitation
- 2nd day: lecture about therapy and treatment of neck pain patients. Dr Athanassios Giannakopoulos
- 3rd day: a. Lecture of Thomas Schlueter and b. discussion about exercise - health programs and exchange of practices between the partners: HBV referred to health promotion programs at workspace e.g stress management, relaxation techniques, breathing etc. DUTH presented its experience on therapeutic exercise programs in office employees. UNIC added also the 'red flags' that need to be included in the participation criteria of the project.
- 4h day: 2nd transnational meeting with the participation of all the partners
- 5th day: Operation room. The partners attended different surgical spinal procedures, such as interventional pain treatment and spinal decompression with spondylodesis.

Second, specific learning modules according to exercise experts' knowledge and topics for each module were defined by all partners. These topics were adjusted to those initially referred in the submission of the project (initially the topics were 6) following the discussion with the physicians and physical therapists (finally the topics became 8). This difference is related to the partners concern about adding also a topic about: a. how to incorporate the THEWS protocol into the health program of companies. B. a literature review of current concepts of exercise for prevention and rehabilitation of neck pain.

The modules were jointly developed between academics (DUTH,HBV,EDEX) and medical experts (GER) as well as being a joint development relationship between countries. Each partner organization had a co-development role across all the modules envisaged. The final modules number and content (8 modules) that was decided after the needs analysis phase had been completed (focus groups) and during the 2nd transnational meeting in Herne, Germany.

These topics were:

1. Health intervention programs at Workspace. (NOR) 1 hour
2. Functional anatomy and biomechanics of cervical spine. (GER, CY, GR) 1 hour
3. Neck pain: differential diagnoses, symptoms and treatment. (GER, CY, GR) 1hour
4. Literature review of current concepts of exercise for prevention and rehabilitation of neck pain. (GER, CY, GR) 3hours
5. Coping strategies for musculoskeletal pain at Workspace. 6hours NOR
6. Development of THEWS protocol (GER, CY, GR). 3 hours
7. Application of THEWS protocol to office employees. 6hours (GER, CY, GR)
8. Incorporating the THEWS protocol into the health program of companies. 1hour (NOR)

This activity was in line with our plans with the participation of all medical specialists from the host organization (Orthopaedic Surgeon, Physical Therapist and Rheumatologist) while all the exercise and health experts of the partner organizations also participated.

The main challenge encountered during this activity was the definition of term “therapeutic” and the way that had to be addressed in the project. The partners discussed thoroughly this issue in terms of “red flags” that had to be determined or preset for the office employees in order to apply any of the exercise protocols proposed. All the partners concluded that the exercise protocols would be beneficial only for office employees who feel discomfort in the neck and upper back region and not for those who need referral to clinical doctors and treatment.



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