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## Badanie HEPRO jako narzędzie opracowywania profilu zdrowia społeczności lokalnej w mieście stołecznym Warszawie

### Streszczenie

**Wstęp.** Przystąpienie Polski do Unii Europejskiej otworzyło drogę do korzystania z pomocy materialnej w postaci funduszy strukturalnych. Od stopnia wykorzystania tych środków, zwłaszcza w sektorze zdrowia publicznego i promocji zdrowia, może w znacznym stopniu zależeć poprawa stanu zdrowia populacji. Jednym z przykładów wykorzystania tych środków na działania z zakresu promocji zdrowia jest badanie HEPRO.

**Cel.** Celem pracy było przedstawienie badania HEPRO, jako przykładu narzędzia pozwalającego na antycypowanie potrzeb zdrowotnych badanej populacji.

**Materiał i metoda.** Materiał stanowiła dokumentacja z badania HEPRO, przeprowadzonego w mieście stołecznym Warszawie.

**Wyniki.** Wyniki badania wykazały, iż pożądane i uzasadnione jest realizowanie działań z zakresu promocji zdrowia mających na celu usprawnienie planowania interwencji z zakresu lokalnej polityki zdrowotnej. Działania takie mają zdecydowanie korzystny wpływ na stan zdrowia populacji i stanowią szansę na poprawę stanu zdrowia mieszkańców.

**Wnioski.** Wnioski, które można wysnuć na podstawie badania są następujące:

- badanie HEPRO stanowi wartościowe narzędzie, mogące służyć prognozowaniu potrzeb zdrowotnych mieszkańców
- ocena stanu zdrowia populacji winna stanowić rudymet planowania działań z zakresu polityki zdrowotnej
- w planowaniu działań z zakresu polityki zdrowotnej winny być brane pod uwagę uwarunkowania zdrowia specyficzne dla badanej populacji.

## Implementation of European Union funds in health promotion on metropolitan city of Warsaw basing on HEPRO Project

### Abstract

**Introduction.** Poland's accession to the European Union has given opportunity to take advantage of EU structural funds. Effective implementation of European funds, especially in the field of public health and health promotion may have a strong impact on the improvement of the population's health.

**Aim.** The aim of this publication is to describe health promotion activities carried out in the city of Warsaw basing on HEPRO research.

**Material and methods.** The analyzed data include the documentation of HEPRO research, which took place in 2006-2007.

**Results.** Results of the research have shown that implementation of health promoting initiatives in the city of Warsaw is reasonable and desirable. These initiatives have positive influence on health of population and are a chance for improving health. Health promoting initiatives have interdisciplinary character and can be performed by various institutions whose activities should be coordinated for the best results. All the actions should be undertaken based on the approved plan of health promoting initiatives in the agglomeration.

**Conclusion.** The conclusion is that health promoting initiatives can be one of main sources of money for health promotion. They do not have only clinical character, but also include other sectors, such as medical statistics. Health policy, as part of health promotion, can be one of main areas of implementing European Union funds.

**Słowa kluczowe:** zdrowie publiczne, promocja zdrowia, HEPRO.

**Key words:** public health, health promotion, HEPRO.

## INTRODUCTION

Polish accession to the European Union has created opportunities for effective use of financial mechanisms of the organization. Health sector is one of the sectors having an opportunity to improve the efficiency and implement a number of innovations.

Initiatives in the field of public health and health promotion as a part of an action to improve the health of the population constitute the area on which special attention in the context of obtaining EU funds should be focused.

The city of Warsaw is the area of implementation of numerous projects in the field of public health and health promotion that are implemented with the support of the European Union.

The text is a part of a study on the use of EU funds for activities in the field of health promotion in the city of Warsaw. There will be presented HEPRO research – an International tool to develop community health profile, which – from the standpoint of public health and health promotion – is crucial for the design of health-related activities in the capital city.

## AIM

Demonstration of the possibility and advisability of implementing initiatives in the field of health promotion in the city of Warsaw basing on HEPRO research – an International tool to develop a community health profile.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The test material was HEPRO research – International tool to develop community health profile [1].

Research method used was the analysis of documents. It has allowed for determining precisely the purpose, scale and scope of the study and its implications for health policy-making of Warsaw and for improving the health of the population.

## RESULTS

HEPRO Project – “International tool to develop community health profile” is a study that was conducted in several cities in Europe, using a questionnaire developed under this project. In Warsaw, the study took place in 2006-2007. It was co-financed by the European Union within the INTERREG IIIB BSR. The entire project comprised 32 partners such as cities or scientific institutions, implementing a program of the World Health Organization “Healthy City”, situated in the Baltic Sea region. Among the participants there were, in addition to Poland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. The Polish cities besides Warsaw, taking part in the project were Łódź, Poznań, Olsztyn and Poddębice [1].

The main objective of the HEPRO Project was to “develop a community health profile based on surveys of residents and use it to plan health-related activities in the city”. It also specifies intermediate goals, such as:

- Collection of data about the health of the local community in the same way in a number of Healthy Cities of the Baltic Sea region,
- Analysis of data in a uniform way for all cities participating in the project,
- Use data to create a community health profile,
- Use of local community health profile for the enhancement of health planning,
- Monitoring changes in the health of the local community by applying the same research tool in the coming years,
- The use of comparative test results from various years to evaluate the interventions used.

An important advantage of the HEPRO Project was that the survey was carried out according to uniform standard questions and held in all the cities participating in the project at a time. HEPRO study has provided large amounts of material on which it is possible to carry out a number of local studies and compare the nature of the cities participating in the project. Comparative analysis may relate to health, social, demographic, living and working environment.

One of many benefits of the program is the ability to increase the effectiveness of health policy by increasing knowledge on the lifestyle. This will allow the precise setting of priorities, and will enable targeting of health promotion, including prevention.

In Warsaw, this type of study is the first one carried on a random sample of 1010 inhabitants.

The total value of the project for the 32 partners was approximately 2 million euro, of which financing by the European Union amounted to 75% of total costs. The project for Warsaw was amounting to 66,600 euro, of which the contribution of the city was 16,650 euro (25% of the full amount) [1].

HEPRO project consisted of three elements. The first of these concerned the development of tools to prepare the health profile of the local community and collect data on a randomly selected adult population. For implementation of this element the following activities were performed: developing of a questionnaire survey, (including translation from English into the native languages), the selection and training of local partners involved in project implementation, education campaign – to encourage residents to participate in surveys, the selection of groups to study (about 1000 inhabitants in each city), collection and analysis of survey data, and preparation of final report (the report contains: a description of the methods of data collection, basic statistical information, data analysis and conclusions for further action).

The second element concerned the use of the conclusions of the report to develop local strategies for the health of residents. The following actions were included here: defining the current health situation in the city, dissemination of the contents and conclusions of the report among local politicians and decision makers, developing a local strategy for public health and the integration of community health with the planning process, exchange of experiences in the creation of local policies with different countries participating in HEPRO.

The third element concerned the cooperation of partners involved in the project. The actions provided by this element consisted of creating a website for HEPRO program part-

ners (access with password, discussions, advice), holding of annual meetings of cities implementing the project in order to exchange experiences at the different stages, holding the final conference presenting the final results of the HEPRO project and preparing strategy for dissemination of HEPRO package as a proven tool for developing community health profile.

HEPRO implementation was divided into five stages; the implementation of each was envisaged for six months.

The first stage covered the period from July to December 2005. The actions taken were focused on organizational issues of the program by the individual partners, the creation of working groups, steering committee, the expert group, preparing for carrying out research: to developing a questionnaire survey, determining the way of data collections, creating a website for HEPRO program partners.

The second stage was carried out from January to June 2006. Then the questionnaire was translated institutions to carry out research (by tender) were selected the research was conducted and the way of analysis of questionnaires was determined.

The third stage began in July and ended in December 2006. As part of its implementation data was analyzed, the results of the report were used to determine the current health situation in the city, the contents of the report and conclusions were disseminated among local politicians and decision makers.

The fourth and fifth stages were carried out during July to December 2007. Then, experiences in the creation of local health policy were exchanged, based on the findings of the report, between partners from different countries participating in HEPRO and strategies to promote the HEPRO package were prepared as a proven tool for developing a health profile of the local community.

There are many benefits resulting from the HEPRO project. Among them there is development of a health profile for the residents of Warsaw, taking into account not only the epidemiological data, but also information directly from residents about their style and living conditions and subjective perceptions of their own health. Additional benefits include outlining of the priorities for actions to supporting health and updating local strategies for health, taking into account the results of the survey, and therefore better suited to the needs of residents. It is also invaluable experience in the implementation of projects co-financed by the EU – and especially the cooperation with partners with extensive experience in the use of EU funds.

For presenting the results, the descriptive statistics were calculated, i.e. the main proportions interest of specific responses in the sample, of all questions. Results were rounded off to integers (no decimal places). The implication method is the sum of the proportions of answers to each question ranging between 99-100%.

If you try to test for continuous variables such as presentation, which is the age divisions, have been applied standard for this type of research (used among others by the Centre for Public Opinion Research).

For analysis of variables of the socio-demographic character and nominal variables (i.e. response categories in the given questions) cross-tabulation and chi-square test were used. The tables qualified for description had to meet two

conditions: the value of chi-square test for the table had to be significant at  $p < 0.01$ , and the differences in the distributions of responses “had to be sufficiently large and clear that discussing them had to make sense from the standpoint of the theory of health behaviors and practices in the broader health policy”. However, in the case of interval variables, means and standard deviations were calculated, as well as Student’s t-test was used for independent groups (two groups) and one-factor ANOVA: i.e. the influence of each factor was considered separately (for example, if you split up the group with regard to education). In both cases, the minimum accepted level of significance was  $p < 0.01$  [1,2].

One of the effects of HEPRO research is developing recommendations for the enhancement of health in the capital city of Warsaw. The study confirmed, therefore, its value as a useful indicator for determining health policies of Warsaw in the coming years. Such planning was not prevented by omission in HEPRO research of certain areas such as the expectations of citizens for actions in support of health, subjective evaluation by the residents of the validity of health problems and subjective perception of obstacles to the realization of a healthy lifestyle.

### Some effects of HEPRO research for the city of Warsaw

Because the HEPRO research showed that most respondents assess their health as good, very good (60%) or medium (20%) the proposed interventions in the field of health promotion should be based on preventive measures or the ones reinforcing health. They should be implemented through inter alia the implementation of social campaigns on those issues. However as almost 75% of respondents, according to the survey, feel stress and nervousness and anxiety, such health promoting programs should be preferred which relatively quickly could be translated to the level of feeling.

It is important that the proposed programs should access the greatest proportion of people who reported that their symptoms prevent the activities performed every day.

Given the scale of problems, the activities carried out in the first place should address the problem of back pain (and the motor system), hypertension, and mental health.

Intervention is also required with tobacco problem. The scale of the problem is indeed lower than in the general population, but the health effects of active and passive smoking force to prioritize nicotine addiction.

With relation to approximately 40% of respondents passively spending free time, emphasis should be given to programs related to physical activity. The chances of success of such campaigns by the fact that most inhabitants of Warsaw declare knowledge about the positive effect of exercise on health.

From the standpoint of city health policy it was important to focus on two population groups: people over 55 years of age and working-people under 35 years of age.

Groups of respondents over 55 years old aroused interest because of the declared worse health condition and more frequent feeling of negative emotions. In addition, more than half of the respondents experienced various chronic ailments. For this group, particular attention should be paid to the form of campaigns, in particular the language used to

convey the message. Such a conclusion can be drawn from analysis of the structure of education of the group: prevalence of people with secondary education compared to general population. This requires the use of clear language and simple forms of communications. Specialist terms should also be avoided.

Programs should be focused on hypertension (more than half of the respondents in this group declare its presence), back pain (30%) and osteoporosis (20%). Referring to the promotion of physical activity it should be remembered that the type and intensity should be tailored to the needs and capabilities of the group. Otherwise, the opposite effect can be expected. An additional premise for promoting physical activity in the age group above 55 years is the large number of people exceeding the standard body mass index BMI. Referring to the results of the study, which confirms that about 20% of the respondents is aware of the positive impact of weight reduction on health-it can be assumed that campaigns to promote physical activity have ended up on fertile ground. Referring to the declared financial situation of the test group, the opportunity to participate in health-related programs should be free of charge or not very expensive.

The main objective of health-related programs designed for groups under 35 years of age should be to maintain or improve health. This is important in the light of assessment of the health by the discussed group – only a small percentage rated their health as poor.

According to the study the main and common health problem in this group is back pain. Prevention should concern civilisation diseases with particular emphasis to hypertension. The topics of the programs should also include smoking as the number of smoking subjects for the population of Warsaw is higher than average.

Great potential for this group is declared a high level of physical activity. This is particularly valuable information in the context of the declaration of 70% of respondents reporting “sedentary” work mode.

Because of the declared good financial situation, the offer addressed this group could be at least partially charged. The obstacle in the implementation of programs aimed at this age group can only be time constraints resulting from professional activity. Nevertheless, this situation creates the possibility to develop the idea of promoting health in the workplace.

Health assessment of the population, the model of which is the HEPRO study, should be the starting point for the implementation of health promotion programs especially in large cities. It should be crucial at the initial part of the algorithm used in the implementation of such activities. Detailed and precise assessment of health status makes it possible to take appropriate and effective intervention, and thus, increases the likelihood of achieving the intended objective.

Implementation of the health promotion activities requires precise preparation and planning. The specific initiatives, for the implementation of which these two conditions must be met, are those that include statistical analysis and that are implemented to identify health problems of the population. The HEPRO study has strategic significance for Warsaw's population because of the potential it is carrying. This potential is the ability to react in advance to some adverse health

events that can be predicted to a greater or lesser extent by analyzing the results HEPRO research.

The study shows that it is possible and reasonable to EU funds for the implementation of activities related to health promotion. Such actions may have an interdisciplinary character, not necessarily relate to the sphere strictly related to health in clinical terms. The concept of health promotion actions should be understood as all the activities that may bring positive health effects, with particularly emphasis to the benefits of local population.

## DISCUSSION

Raising funds from the European Union on health-related activities in Poland is not an entirely new issue. The experience of a number of Polish cities shows that acquisition of these measures is possible and can be helpful in implementing the development plan.

For example: In Lubuskie Province, Hospital in Drezdenko received from the Regional Operational Programme for Lubuskie Province 7.29 million pln to modernize the facility and a further 930,000 pln to purchase equipment for the department of general surgery. Completion of the total investment is planned for 2010, and its total cost is about 16 460 000 pln [3,4].

In the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Providence the Bydgoszcz University Hospital No. 2. purchased for the department of new-borns and premature babies. This is particularly important investment in the context of health care for the youngest part of society. Total investment cost is 5,197,346 pln of which the European Regional Development Fund will reimburse 3 218 500 pln. The remaining part is lined by the authorities of the region [5,6].

In the Warmia and Mazury, in turn, the authorities announced a competition for funding health care units within the Regional Operational Programme for Warmia and Mazury 2007-2013. The amount of the distribution is 140 000 000 pln. It can be designed, inter alia, for the creation, expansion, or modernization of hospices, community homes for the chronically ill. This is an important initiative in terms of improving the quality of life for chronically and terminally ill [7].

In the region of Masovia, Specialized Hospital in Radom received a grant of 32 000 000 pln for the completion of the gynecological and obstetrical pavilion [8,9].

Activities of healthcare institutions and other entities that carry out the initiative in the field of health promotion constitute, in spite of the above examples, the still under-diagnosed issue. The examples given above and this study are optimistic, showing the real benefits that could flow from the acquisition of EU funds. The chances offered by the European Union, by the exercising of its financial mechanisms should be an incentive to expand knowledge about how to administer and raise funds.

## CONCLUSIONS

- European Union funds can be a significant source of financing initiatives related to health promotion
- Health promotion initiatives need not be focused solely on health care activities: they may also have the nature of the research carried out for example in order to anticipate health problems
- Health policy, as a component of health promotion, may be an area of European Union funds in the field of health promotion

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