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ALONE

Innovative Health Professionals Training Program on
Existential Loneliness among Older People

NEWSLETTER

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Existential Loneliness among older people: Launch of two International Reports

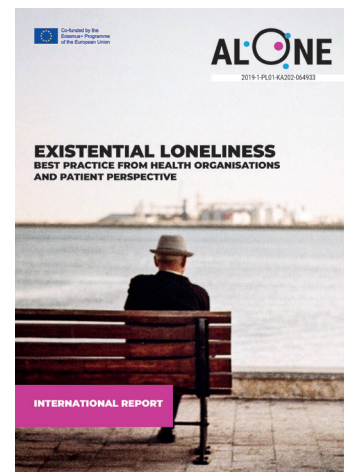
As the state of the art suggests, loneliness is a complex concept that involves physical, social and existential dimensions. Older people in general, especially those in need of care, express a need to talk about existential issues. When existential needs are not recognized and addressed, this can lead to feelings of existential loneliness that in turn affect health and wellbeing. Health care professionals, working with older people, often have to deal with their existential loneliness, finding this encounter both meaningful and challenging. They currently have limited or no training in how to cope with older persons experiencing existential loneliness.

The Erasmus+ project "Alone" aims to support health care professionals in recognize loneliness, in all its forms, among older people and strengthen their ability to deal with this complex phenomenon in order to provide a better patients care, increase wellbeing and life expectancy.

In order to investigate Existential loneliness and current best practices, as well as to understand the impact of this phenomenon on older people, the transnational partnership of Alone project, involving five European countries (Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Sweden), over the past months carried out different researches on this theme and has created the first two outputs which will be the starting point for developing the educational materials.

BEST PRACTICES FROM HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS AND PATIENTS' PERSPECTIVE

The first project activity concerned the creation of a collection of Best practices from health organizations and patient perspective on existential loneliness.



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All partners made an extensive review on the current knowledge, findings, theoretical and methodological contributions to the topic of existential loneliness in their country. A special focus concerned the health professionals' perspectives and how it influences provision of care. The information and material collected have been combined into a practical report about how health care professionals and member of NGOs currently deal with or identify issues related to existential loneliness in each partner country. This report will constitute the basis for the national adaptations of the training material that will be developed within the project.

The IO1 full report is available in English and in each partners language here <https://aloneproject.eu/documents-2/>

National Analysis and Survey about healthcare professionals experiences of encountering older persons' existential loneliness

The second operational phase of Alone project, that has the objective of producing a report revealing challenges and limitations for healthcare professionals in encountering older persons' existential loneliness, has recently ended. The drafted report provides the point of view of health care professionals working in different healthcare contexts (home care, nursing home care, palliative care, primary care, hospital care, or pre-hospital care).

The aim of the focus-groups and interviews was to explore health care professionals' understanding, perceptions and experiences of existential loneliness among older persons and their educational and support needs in order to deal with it.

In total 18 focus groups and 9 individual interviews have been carried out in the different partners countries with the total involvement of 139 health professionals. Each partner was responsible to organize the focus groups in own country following a unique research protocol shared among the partnership.

Data emerged have been analyzed and put in evidence similarities and differences in the perceptions and experiences of loneliness among professionals involved. Report findings will be the basis of the training curriculum about existential loneliness among elderly people addressed to health professionals.

The IO2 full report in English, and in each partners language, will be soon available on Alone website www.aloneproject.eu.

Next Steps

Report findings will be the basis for the creation of a pedagogical report on the required learning outcomes. These standards will be in accordance with the European Qualification Framework in combination with ECVET and EQAVET recommendations and it will play a key role in developing the training curriculum and validation of the material for health professionals. Once that is done, the partnership will work on the development of a new VET curricula and learning materials, aimed to train health professionals on the topic of Existential loneliness among older people.

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