

Evidence-informed Policy Network (EVIPNet) Europe
Hungary Workshop/Meeting
Budapest, Hungary, 5-6 November 2019

Background

Evidence-informed Policy-making (EIP), aiming to ensure that the decision-making process is systematically and transparently informed by the best available scientific evidence, has increasingly been recognized globally as an important means by which to accelerate achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the WHO European Region, the Evidence-informed Policy Network (EVIPNet) Europe was established in October 2012 under the umbrella of the WHO European Health Information Initiative and in support of the “*Action plan to strengthen the use of evidence, information and research for policy-making in the WHO European Region*”. EVIPNet envisages a world in which the best available and context-sensitive evidence is used to inform health policy-making. The Network pursues its goal by fostering the implementation and institutionalization of EIP activities in its member countries. Knowledge Translation Platforms (KTP), promoted by EVIPNet, are a recognized mechanism for institutionally linking research to action. With the understanding that each country needs to develop its own capacity in EIP, EVIPNet Europe supports national stakeholders in gaining knowledge, skills and experience in EIP.

Hungary officially became member of EVIPNet Europe in 2015. Work on EVIPNet has since been part of the Biennial Collaborative Agreements (BCAs) between the WHO Regional Office for Europe and Hungary. Under this frame, a situation analysis was conducted on the EIP context in Hungary, and an evidence brief for policy (EBP) was developed for antimicrobial resistance (AMR). A policy dialogue with advice on policy options for addressing the AMR challenge in Hungary took place in Budapest in December 2017. This process and the technical document it produced has served as a model in other countries of the WHO European Region.

The primary objective of the workshop was to further expand knowledge and skills among key stakeholders in Hungary and create a solid foundation for future EIP activities.

Participants came from different departments within the Ministry of Human Capacities, the National Institute of Pharmacy and Nutrition, the National Transfusion Service, the National Health Insurance Fund Administration, and the National Public Health Center and Cochrane Hungary. The workshop was facilitated by Tomas Pantoja (Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile), Evelina Chapman (Consultant, WHO Regional Office for Europe), Tanja Kuchenmuller (Unit leader, Knowledge Management, Evidence and Research for Policy-Making, WHO Regional Office for Europe) and Balázs Babarczy (EVIPNet National Champion, National Public Health Centre) with co-facilitation from Marge Reinap (Head of Country Office, Estonia).

Workshop opening

The workshop was opened by Szabolcs Szigeti, Deputy Secretary of State, from the State Secretariat for Health and Ledia Lazeri WHO Representative in Hungary. Both highlighted the importance of using evidence in the policymaking process and the opportunity of building capacity in this area through the tools proposed by EVIPNet. Tanja Kuchenmüller from the WHO Regional Office for Europe welcomed participants and briefly introduced the EVIPNet approach for the Region and its potential to address policy issues in Hungary.



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Workshop design

The two-day workshop comprised brief plenary sessions to give an overview of the methods and tools used in EIP and its products followed by practical work in small groups (see Agenda) that allowed participants to rapidly acquire and apply new knowledge, and mutually share their newly gained experiences.

Workshop outcomes

At the end of the workshop the participants as a group were able to:

- understand EIP and existing knowledge translation activities
- acquire knowledge and skills about key knowledge translation mechanisms
- commit themselves to strengthen EVIPNet Hungary.

Next steps

Based on the initial work undertaken during the workshop and with the task of developing a workplan for their institutions, participants committed to assess the capacity of their organisations in using research evidence and potentially establish a network at the national level aimed to promote the use of EIP. Moreover, the State Secretariat for Health, committed to institutionalizing the systematic and transparent use of evidence in health policies, will further explore steps in view of strengthening the health policy unit's capacities in evidence-informed policy-making.