

Evidence-informed Policy Network (EVIPNet) Europe

A national dialogue on the evidence for the reduction of alcohol consumption in the Republic of Moldova
Chisinau, the Republic of Moldova, 13 November 2015



Introduction

© WHO

EVIPNet Europe is a WHO Regional Office for Europe initiative. It aims to increase country capacity in developing health policies informed by the best available research evidence – in line with and in support of "Health 2020" implementation (1). EVIPNet Europe institutionalizes knowledge translation (KT) – the process of fostering research use in policy-making – through the establishment of national country teams/knowledge translation (KT) platforms. These groups plan and implement KT activities at country level. This summary describes the first national dialogue on the evidence brief for policy (EBP) on alcohol consumption control in Moldova.

EBP in the Republic of Moldova

EVIPNet Europe was launched in 2012 and initiated a pilot phase in three countries (the Republic of Moldova, Slovenia and Tajikistan) in 2014 to test the feasibility of the EVIPNet methodology. One of the key pilot activities is the development of EBPs, which synthesize the best available research evidence to address a specific policy issue in a concise way, written in non-expert language and adapted to various stakeholders. EBPs are based on a systematic search and appraisal of the global, regional and local evidence to understand what is known about that problem and which policy options effectively address the problem. EBPs are the key inputs to a deliberative dialogue (policy dialogue) to effectively blend explicit (scientific) and tacit (experience-based) knowledge to guide policy development.

Following a capacity-building workshop on the development of EBP in March 2015, a working group was formed to draft an EBP on the reduction of alcohol consumption, which was an issue identified as a priority by the Moldovan Ministry of Health, tackling the second highest alcohol consumption in the world. An international consultant provided technical support and guidance throughout the process.

A national dialogue on the evidence for the reduction of alcohol consumption and for its control

The draft EBP identified the low implementation of the National Alcohol Control Programme as the problem to address. While this was supported by some, limited, local evidence, the EBP required additional sources of evidence, for example those from non-health sectors, as well as expert opinions to substantiate the scope and causes of the problem. For this reason, a national dialogue was convened to obtain guidance on finalizing the EBP and to

complement the EBP with its tacit knowledge. The expected outputs included (i) the problem clarified and finalized; (ii) a list of potential options and implementation considerations made; (iii) next steps identified to finalize the EBP; and (iv) an intersectoral collaboration on finalizing, promoting and disseminating the EBP initiated. The WHO Secretariat of EVIPNet Europe provided technical support and guidance in preparation and organization of the dialogue to ensure that these outputs could be realized.

Achievements: an intersectoral working group established and viable options discussed

The dialogue gathered 23 participants representing over 10 government sectors including the Ministries of Health, Agriculture and Food Industry, Finance, Education, Internal Affairs, Labour and Social Protection, Youth and Sports, and Broadcasting Coordinating Councils well as academia and civil society such as the National Youth Council. The dialogue was opened by Aliona Serbulenco, the Deputy Minister of Health, and facilitated by Marcela Țîrdea, the National Champion who has completed the EVIPNet Europe's Train-the-Trainer workshop on facilitation skills and the policy dialogue workshop at the multicountry meeting.

The stakeholders engaged in an open and fruitful dialogue encompassing social, cultural, economic and health impacts of high alcohol consumption, underscoring actions from whole of government and society. They agreed that the low implementation of the National Alcohol Control Programme was the problem to focus and address in the EBP. They continued the dialogue on the scope of the problem, underlying causes of the problem, potential options as well as implementation considerations. The stakeholders advised the EBP working group to undertake an additional literature review and investigate proposed options including effective intersectoral working mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation (targets and indicators in particular) and financing mechanisms.

Reflections on the dialogue

The national stakeholders will provide support in finalizing, promoting and disseminating the EBP. One participant concluded the dialogue with the following, *“One institution can't solve a problem on its own. Alcohol consumption is a social problem and only a multidisciplinary approach and contribution of each one of us solves the problem.”*

Next steps for EVIPNet Europe in Moldova

- The EBP working team to undertake additional literature review to finalize the sections on the problem of low implementation of the National Alcohol Control Programme, policy options and implementation considerations.
- The newly established intersectoral stakeholders to review the revised EBP and identify ways forward to increase political and civil engagement.
- The EBP working team to develop a second EBP to provide an evidence base for drafted amendments to the alcohol control legislations.
- The final EBP to be presented to the National Council to convene a policy dialogue.

Reference

1. WHO Regional Office for Europe. Health 2020: a European policy framework supporting action across government and society for health and well-being. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2012 (EUR/RC62/9).