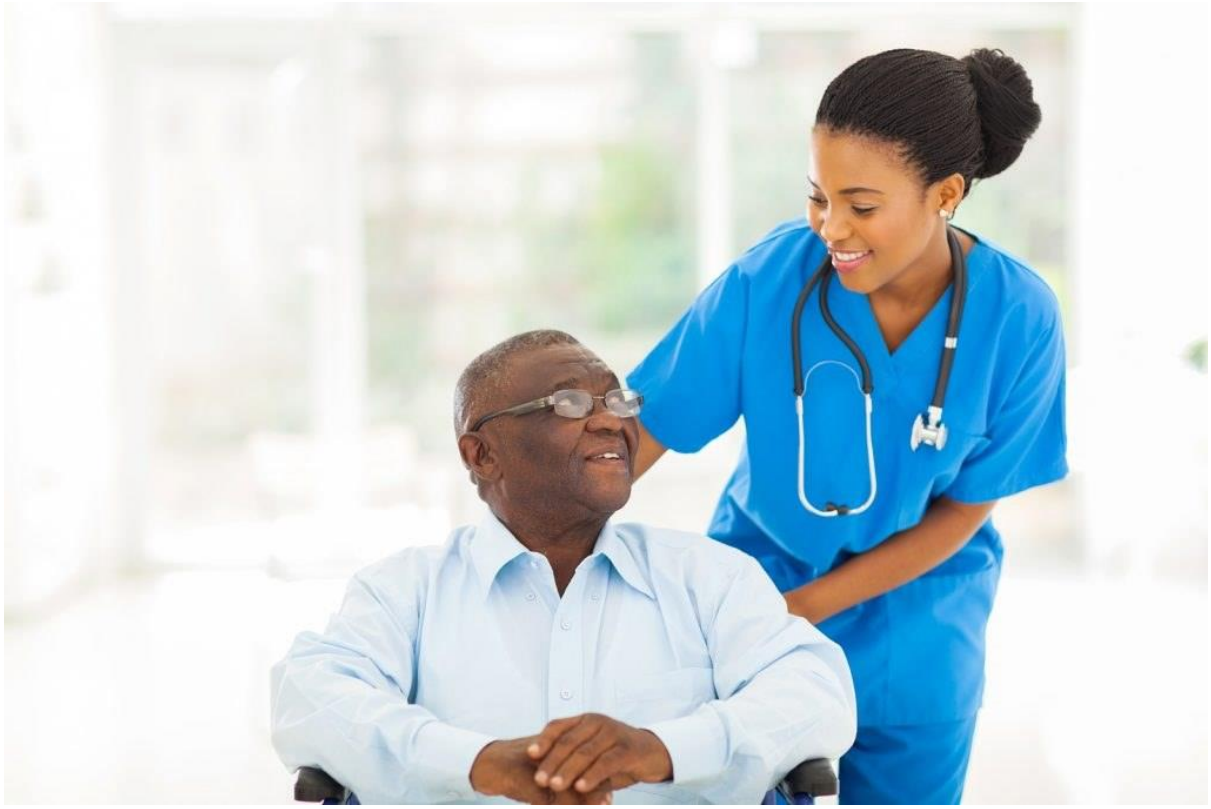

CARES PRESS NO.3

Dear Readers,

We are excited to present the third edition of the CARES project newsletter. The past semester has been filled with activities and progress, bringing us closer to achieving our shared goals. In this issue, we highlight four articles focused on the project activities during the third semester, including:

- **Discovering Trends and Solutions: The Third Study Visit to Sweden**
- **First Tutoring Session on Legal Aspects of Telecare, Telemedicine, and Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare**
- **Aragon Health School (ESA): A Community of Practice Empowering Patients and Local Communities**

In addition, this newsletter features two more articles covering important topics for our sector: an overview of the new EU regulation on artificial intelligence and a discussion on policy instruments available for Interreg Europe projects.

We hope that you will find valuable insights in this edition, and that the information provided will inspire and support your continued work. We invite you to read, reflect, and share your thoughts with us.

Best regards,

The CARES Project Team

Discovering Trends and Solutions: The Third Study Visit to Sweden

On May 14th and 15th, the third study visit of the CARES project took place at The Research and Development Center in Linköping, Sweden. This visit offered another opportunity for project partners and stakeholders to exchange knowledge and experiences in telecare and telemedicine. Participants explored the intricacies of the Swedish care system and its challenges.

During the two-day event, attendees were introduced to four exemplary practices from the Östergötland region:

1. **BEATA**: A system designed to ensure the safety of residents in Linköping's care homes. This technology monitors and alerts staff when a resident is in a risky situation and needs assistance. The system can be tailored to the individual's status and needs.
2. **Welfare Technology Library**: A collection of preventive solutions aimed at enhancing knowledge and promoting technology use among social care workers. This initiative helps elderly individuals adapt to new technologies in their homes, aiding them in daily life.
3. **EVIKOMP**: A competence development model for social care professionals that utilizes workplace learning. The training involves the entire work group and features an e-learning platform with co-created materials, teacher support, and leadership training. This model aims to promote and ensure workplace learning and exchanges among professionals.
4. **Internet-based Psychological Treatments for Older Adults and Informal Caregivers**: Research focusing on clinician-supported internet-based psychological treatments for older adults and informal caregivers.

The study visit in Linköping was a valuable opportunity to forge new connections and share experiences with professionals in modern technological solutions for elderly care and support for individuals with limitations. Participants returned to their regions with fresh ideas and inspirations, driving forward advancements in healthcare.

First Tutoring Session on *Legal Aspects of Telecare, Telemedicine and Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare*

The workshop titled *Legal Aspects of Telecare, Telemedicine and Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare* was held online on June 18 as part of the CARES project (Interreg Europe). It focused on the legal issues associated with new technologies in healthcare.

1. Current Legal Issues

The workshop began with a discussion on current legal challenges related to telecare, telemedicine, and AI. It was noted that legal frameworks often lag behind technological advancements, leading to gaps and uncertainties. Key issues include liability for medical errors in telemedicine, data protection for patients, and ensuring equitable access to remote healthcare services.

2. Overview of Key EU and National Regulations

Participants reviewed significant EU and national regulations affecting healthcare technologies. Experts emphasized the need for effective data protection laws, accountability in remote healthcare services, and adaptation of regulations to healthcare's specific needs. Harmonizing these regulations is crucial for supporting innovation while maintaining patient safety.

3. Practices (Good and Failed) in Telecare, Telemedicine, and AI

The workshop included a review of practical examples of telecare, telemedicine, and AI implementations. Successful practices highlighted include programs improving healthcare access in underserved areas and AI tools enhancing diagnostics. Conversely, failures often stemmed from inadequate legal preparation, insufficient risk assessment, and poor patient communication.

4. Case Analysis – Legal and Regulatory Aspects

Finally, specific cases involving telemedicine and AI were analyzed to explore legal and regulatory issues. The discussions focused on medical errors due to technology misuse and cross-border healthcare challenges. The importance of addressing legal aspects in technology implementation to ensure patient safety and system trust was emphasized.

Summary

The CARES project workshop, held online on June 18, provided valuable insights into the legal aspects of telecare, telemedicine, and AI in healthcare. It underscored the need for robust legal frameworks to keep pace with technological advancements and ensure patient protection. Ongoing adaptation of regulations and international collaboration are essential for advancing modern healthcare.

Aragon Health School (ESA): A Community of Practice Empowering Patients and Local Communities

The Aragon Health School (ESA) is an initiative by the Health Department aimed at enhancing the information, training, and skills of patients, caregivers, and users. Its goal is to **increase** their **knowledge** about **diseases** and **care**, fostering autonomy and participation in

health-related decision-making. By promoting person-centered healthcare, the ESA contributes to the equity and sustainability of the healthcare system.

One of the key strengths of the ESA is its extensive participation and collaboration the local community in all the content it generates. All the General Directorates of the Aragón Health Department, responsible for care provision and planning, are integrated in the ESA. Additionally, the ESA boasts a network that includes over 30 patient associations and local entities, such as neighborhood associations, town halls. These stakeholders offer deep insights of the citizens, enabling the adaptation of training activities to meet the specific needs of the community.

Moreover, the ESA has a community of practice comprising healthcare professionals who provide the scientific expertise necessary to ensure that the information and training resources are rigorous and evidence-based. This blend of management bodies, local knowledge, and scientific expertise enhances the ESA's effectiveness, ensuring the creation of high-quality training materials.

As part of Aragón's Digital Health Strategy, the ESA focuses on developing **digital health educational** content, improving its accessibility to the population, and enhancing the healthcare system's ability to integrate patients by increasing their knowledge. This includes empowering patients and their social environment, encouraging their participation in managing their health. Digital health literacy is crucial in this digital age, enabling citizens to access quality information to address health issues as well as promoting heath literacy.

The ESA web portal is a **vital tool** that provides accessible information to patients, caregivers, and the general public. Additionally, it utilizes the Moodle platform inherent within the health app – SaludInforma – used by citizens to offer online and blended learning. These educational tools are also accessible to primary care and hospital professionals, allowing them to recommend the most appropriate training resources to their patients, guiding them in using validated information, and promoting better health self-management.

In summary, the ESA is a **holistic initiative** that merges the local insights of patient associations and other stakeholders with the evidence-based scientific expertise of healthcare professionals. This collaboration enhances health literacy and patient autonomy in Aragón, and supported by digital tools that provide access to quality health information. These tools are directly recommended by professionals to patients in their care centers as part of the personalized medicine.

Impact of the EU Artificial Intelligence Regulation on Healthcare and Elderly Care

The recently adopted **Artificial Intelligence Act (Regulation No. 2024/1689)** by the European Union is poised to significantly impact the healthcare and elderly care sectors. This

comprehensive regulation, which sets harmonized rules for the development and deployment of AI technologies, aims to enhance safety, transparency, and accountability. Here's a closer look at how this regulation will influence healthcare and elderly care:

Enhanced Safety and Reliability in Healthcare

1. High-Risk AI Systems: The AI Act classifies AI systems used in healthcare as high-risk. This includes applications such as diagnostic tools, treatment planning systems, and AI-driven patient monitoring technologies. These systems will be subject to stringent safety standards and regulatory oversight. Manufacturers will need to ensure their systems meet rigorous testing and validation requirements to prevent errors and ensure reliability. This heightened scrutiny aims to minimize risks and enhance the overall safety of AI technologies in critical medical applications.

2. Improved Patient Outcomes: By enforcing strict safety and performance criteria, the regulation is expected to improve patient outcomes. Reliable AI systems can assist healthcare professionals in diagnosing diseases more accurately, personalizing treatment plans, and predicting patient deterioration, thus facilitating timely interventions. This can lead to better management of chronic conditions and more effective treatment strategies.

Increased Transparency and Trust

1. Transparent AI Systems: One of the key provisions of the AI Act is the requirement for transparency in AI systems. In healthcare, this means that patients and healthcare providers will have clearer insights into how AI systems make decisions. For instance, if an AI system recommends a particular treatment, the underlying reasoning and data used will be accessible and understandable. This transparency is crucial for building trust between patients and AI technologies.

2. Informed Decision-Making: With more transparency, patients and healthcare professionals can make more informed decisions. Understanding how AI systems reach their conclusions can help clinicians interpret AI recommendations better and integrate them into their clinical judgment. This is especially important in complex cases where AI provides supplemental insights rather than definitive answers.

Strengthened Accountability and Ethical Use

1. Liability for Errors: The AI Act establishes clear guidelines for accountability, meaning that developers and operators of high-risk AI systems in healthcare will be liable for any harm caused by their technologies. This provision ensures that there is a clear line of responsibility in cases where AI systems fail or cause harm. This accountability is critical in maintaining high standards of care and ensuring that any issues are promptly addressed.

2. Ethical Considerations: The regulation also addresses ethical concerns related to AI in healthcare. For example, it prohibits the use of AI systems for mass surveillance or other

unethical applications. This ensures that AI technologies are used in ways that respect patient privacy and adhere to ethical standards.

Impact on Elderly Care

1. Improved Care for the Elderly: AI technologies can play a transformative role in elderly care by enhancing monitoring, diagnostics, and personalized care. The AI Act's focus on high-risk applications means that AI systems used in this sector, such as fall detection sensors, health monitoring devices, and robotic assistants, will need to meet high safety and reliability standards. This can lead to improved care quality and better management of age-related health issues.

2. Support for Caregivers: AI systems that support elderly care can also assist caregivers by providing real-time data and alerts about the health and well-being of elderly individuals. This can help in managing care more effectively and reducing the burden on caregivers, who often face significant challenges in providing high-quality care.

3. Accessibility and Inclusivity: By setting clear standards for the development and deployment of AI technologies, the AI Act can help ensure that these tools are accessible and inclusive. This is particularly important in elderly care, where ensuring that technologies are user-friendly and adapted to the needs of older adults is essential for their effective use.

Implementation and Future Prospects

1. Transition and Adaptation: While the AI Act promises many benefits, its implementation will require significant adaptation within the healthcare and elderly care sectors. Organizations will need to invest in compliance measures, such as updating technologies and training staff. However, these initial investments are likely to be outweighed by the long-term benefits of safer and more effective AI systems.

2. Ongoing Innovation: The regulation aims to foster a balance between innovation and regulation. By providing a clear framework for the use of AI, it can help drive innovation in healthcare and elderly care, ensuring that new technologies meet high standards of safety and efficacy while also encouraging ongoing advancements in the field.

In summary, the AI Act is set to have a profound impact on healthcare and elderly care by enhancing the safety, transparency, and accountability of AI systems. While its implementation will require adjustments, the regulation's focus on high-risk applications and ethical considerations will contribute to improved patient care, better support for elderly individuals, and more informed decision-making within the healthcare sector.

The Role of Policy Instruments in Interreg Europe Programme Projects

Policy instruments play a crucial role in the projects of the Interreg Europe Programme, which aims to support interregional cooperation across Europe. This Programme helps

regions share knowledge, experience, and policy solutions to improve the effectiveness of regional policies and development programs.

The Role of Policy Instruments in the Interreg Europe Program

Improving the Quality of Regional Policies: Policy instruments are fundamental tools for supporting regional development. The Interreg Europe Programme works by exchanging good practices and experiences between regions, enabling better alignment of local and regional policies with the needs of specific communities. Participants in the program can use policy instruments to implement changes that contribute to sustainable development, innovation, or improved resource efficiency.

Policy Instruments as Tools for Implementing Change: Interreg Europe projects focus on influencing specific policy instruments, such as regional operational programs funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), smart specialization strategies, or local action plans. Through these projects, participants have the opportunity to update, improve, or modify these policy instruments to better address the challenges related to regional development.In the CARES project, partners are working to enhance the following policy instruments:

1. **The European Funds for Kujawy and Pomorze 2021-2027 (PL)**
2. **Health and Silver Roadmap of the Regional Council of Nouvelle-Aquitaine 2022-2027 (FR)**
3. **Regional Digitalisation Strategy (DK)**
4. **Workplan 2022-2023 LGVO: Management Group Care and Nursing (SE)**
5. **Regional Social and Health Plan (IT)**
6. **The Digital Health Strategy 2021-2026 (ES)**
7. **Plan of Health Promotion, Prevention, and Early Detection of Diseases in the City of Zagreb 2023-2025 (HR)**
8. **Regional Strategic Program on Health Security and Social Vulnerability (PL)**

These efforts aim to align regional health strategies with emerging needs, promote innovation, and ensure that public policies effectively address challenges related to aging populations, digital health, and social vulnerability.

Mobilizing Financial Resources: Policy instruments, such as structural and investment funds, play a critical role in mobilizing financial resources for Interreg Europe projects. By effectively managing these instruments, regions can gain access to funding that supports the implementation of innovative solutions and promotes sustainable development.

Strengthening Regional Governance: Interreg Europe also supports the improvement of regional governance, including the effective use of public policy instruments. Participation in the program gives regions the opportunity to better understand and more effectively utilize policy instruments in managing development. These changes are implemented through policy recommendations and actions resulting from the exchange of knowledge between regions.

Monitoring and Evaluation: In Interreg Europe projects, an important aspect is monitoring the impact of policy instruments on regional development. Project partners collaborate to measure the effectiveness of implemented changes and adjust policy instruments to evolving economic and social conditions. This approach helps to continuously improve policy tools and better tailor them to the actual needs of the regions.

Policy instruments are a key element in the Interreg Europe Programme because they enable regions to implement specific changes that contribute to their development. Through international cooperation, the exchange of experiences, and the effective management of these instruments, the program helps regions across Europe achieve their political and developmental goals. The CARES project demonstrates how enhancing regional health and social policy instruments can have a significant impact on the well-being of communities across diverse European regions.

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