

Geriatric Medicine Literacy Course for Older Adults PROGRAMMING Working Group 5 activity

The primary aim of PROGRAMMING COST Action 21122 is to define the content of education and training activities on basic principles of older people's care, destined for professionals non-specialists in geriatric medicine (GM) and adapted to the local context, the needs and assets of stakeholders and the pragmatic possibilities of involved settings, especially for countries where GM is still emerging.

In this way, PROGRAMMING is addressing the growing global need for healthy aging and high-quality health services for the expanding older population. To meet this demand, health systems must adopt a more integrated model of care, encompassing all levels of care that serve older population, including community-based, primary care, hospital and institutional settings. This journey of care requires the involvement of a variety of healthcare professionals who work with older patients, as well as the active participation of society at large, including older adults themselves. To achieve healthy ageing, it is also crucial to shift from a treatment-based approach to one of prevention, adopting healthy behaviors throughout life cycle. Every citizen should be empowered to adopt healthy behaviors to achieve healthy ageing. Healthcare professionals play an essential role in conveying accurate information, especially in an era where misinformation is readily available and may promote unhealthy behaviors.

Working Group 5 (WG5) has been established to promote the Dissemination and impact maximization of the action. One of WG5's aims is to ***raise awareness and promote the added value of the specialised approach of GM in the health and wellbeing of older people among health care professionals, policy makers, older people and the general public***, as well as to build GM-related health literacy among health care professionals. Aligned with this objective, one of the purposes of WG5 activities is ***to raise awareness on the importance of Geriatric Medicine and Geriatric literacy in ageing societies, both in healthcare professionals and in general public***.

Indeed, health literacy regarding healthy ageing becomes essential, as individuals with low levels of health literacy often face physical and/or cognitive issues. It has been shown that improved health literacy enables older people, including those with multiple chronic conditions, to maintain higher levels of active aging—that is, the ability to engage in meaningful activities according to their goals, functional capacities, and available opportunities. With more people living with chronic conditions into advanced age, health literacy can help them cope with illnesses, manage functional limitations, and lead more fulfilling lives. Engaging older people in their healthcare is crucial to promoting healthy ageing. Increasing their level of knowledge about GM related topics may even lead them to advocate for the need for specialized geriatric care.

In this context, WG5 has established a project that aims to enhance health literacy among older adults, their families, and caregivers, fostering meaningful health improvements in older people.

To support this effort, we have developed a **kit of 10 presentations** on geriatric care, focusing on non-pharmacological approaches to key challenges facing older adults. This kit will be available to all PROGRAMMING COST Action members, enabling them to conduct health literacy sessions in their respective countries. The presentations will be provided in an editable PowerPoint format, allowing for translation and adaptation to each country's clinical standards and guidelines.

In summary, by promoting a comprehensive approach to geriatric care and prioritizing health literacy, this PROGRAMMING initiative seeks to empower health care systems and professionals worldwide to better serve the needs of an aging population. Through targeted education and adaptable resources, we aim to drive significant improvements in health literacy, enhancing the capacity of older adults and their caregivers to navigate health challenges and enjoy a higher quality of life.

Through the link below, you will have access to a Google Drive containing the PowerPoint presentations:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1mrmqQM_vz72QJUzEscDolglU_7bcxawo?usp=sharing

If you would like to use these presentations in your clinical practice with older adults, you can download them, translate as needed, and make any relevant modifications. Please acknowledge that this resource was developed by PROGRAMMING COST Action 21122 and funded by the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST). We would also appreciate it if you could report back to us on the context in which you used these materials, including the audience and setting. If possible, share a photo of your health literacy initiative. Additionally, we would appreciate it if you could translate the entire presentation kit into your own language to make it available for other PROGRAMMING members. For this purpose, please contact: secretary@eugms.org.

The presentations are mainly informational, but to foster interaction and better engagement with the audience, we decided to include several (fictional) clinical cases. In some sections of the presentations, you will find texts that you are expected to customize; for example, in clinical cases, you should use names that are common in your country, and in the vaccination presentation, include vaccination criteria appropriate to your local context, based on your country's clinical guidelines.

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