

## Summary Osteoarthritis Communicator

"Objectives": Specific products delivered will be: A/ Vocational training programme and tutorial for training of osteoarthritis communicators; B/ Programme for recruitment of trainers/teachers of osteoarthritis communicators and for recruitment of osteoarthritis communicators; C/ Study material about osteoarthritis for physiotherapists. The project will train osteoarthritis patients to become osteoarthritis communicators, develop written instructions for how to train osteoarthritis patients to become osteoarthritis communicators and develop a study material about osteoarthritis to be used in professional training of physiotherapists.

"Valorisation": The project has access to a European network of Rheumatism Associations, which includes patients, physicians and a number of specialists. A dedicated awareness raising programme will be undertaken using seminars and workshops, meetings, exhibitions, bill posting, brochures and folders, website, lobbying targeted towards politicians and decision makers within healthcare, training centres.

"Target group" of the project are the national professional training programmes of future physiotherapists.

Today these lack the knowledge and curriculum necessary to deliver adequate training of how to prevent, treat and attend to consequences of osteoarthritis. The project has an innovative approach by creating a social dialogue between patient and healthcare professional in order to change and reduce this deficit in professional education of physiotherapists. The project will also reach the Rheumatism Associations in Europe and their members.

"Background": There is today a shortage of physiotherapists who know how to prevent, treat and limit the consequences of osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis is a rheumatic disease that affects the joints, especially knees and hips. Osteoarthritis has today become more common among people in their forties. People get older and as a result, the public in Europe costs for osteoarthritis become extremely high. There are several methods of treatment available today and it is possible to prevent and limit the consequences of osteoarthritis. Many of these involve physiotherapy. Studies show that adequate exercise and education can be an excellent alternative to painkillers and might even delay or eliminate the need for an operation. However, there is limited knowledge of and training in these methods of treatment within the professional training of physiotherapists. As a result, there is a great shortage in the number of physiotherapists able to treat the consequences of osteoarthritis. Advances in European health care in treating osteoarthritis would diminish the suffering of millions of people and contribute to the saving of economic resources in the EU.(Source: The European Bone and Joint Health Strategies Project, finished with the completion of the work in June 2004; Grant Agreement S12.304 598.)

"Partnership": The Osteoarthritis communicator partnership (SE, GR, UK, DE, LT, and LV) enables cooperation between a Vocational Training centre, a self-help association, a University, two Hospital for Rheumatic diseases, a Rehabilitation Centre, a Communication bureau, the Registered Physiotherapists professional body and trade union and Rheumatism Associations. This brings together highly complementary expertise, different fields of experiences, physiotherapist, patients and health care sector to work together in order to reduce the shortage of physiotherapists who can treat osteoarthritis in Europe.