
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

City of Zagreb - Dementia Friendly Community

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Introduction

The City of Zagreb, in collaboration with institutions and civil society, has been sensitizing the public for many years to the growing problem of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and their destigmatization. In an effort to promote further investment and enable people with dementia to live independently as long as possible, the City of Zagreb has signed a Registration and Process Agreement on December 14, 2017 to become "Dementia Friendly Community". With registration, the City of Zagreb joined European initiative and gained title "The City of Zagreb is becoming Dementia Friendly Community". This made the City of Zagreb the first such city in Croatia.

Policy context and objective

The agreement was signed with the Croatian Association for Alzheimer's Disease, which in 2016 became part of the international Friends of Dementia initiative. The initiative was launched by the Alzheimer Society of London, the UK's leading dementia society. In doing so, the City of Zagreb has joined a growing number of world capitals that have already initiated this process.

In order to meet the criteria of the agreement and create a working plan, a working group have been established to govern the development of the "Dementia Friendly Community", which brings together key stakeholders who are necessary for successful project implementation. The working group is composed of representatives of social care centers, physicians, neurology specialists, police, city administration, public transportation, firefighters and civil society.

Targeted population

People with dementia as citizens (not only people defined by their dementia as 'patients'), their carers and families.

Highlights

The working group has started with the Basic Education Program within the City of Zagreb's "Dementia Friendly Community" development program, and in the first cycle of the education the program brought together the employees of the Zagreb Electric Tram, the Zagreb Police Department, and the Zagreb Public Fire Department.

The actors who are in frequent contact with citizens were educated, and the aim of the training was to familiarize them with the basic concepts of the disease, how to identify a person with dementia and how to approach such a person.

In addition to educating key actors who are in daily contact with citizens, an important segment that should be addressed is the care and care facilities for older people, such as hospices, nursing homes, and day care centers. With this in mind, the working group is in preparation of a handbook for "Dementia Friendly Institution", which aims to highlight the importance of identifying people with dementia and to help the staff of the institution with advice on how to communicate with, and understand and adapt to the people affected.

Discussion and lessons learned

Most people with dementia live in their own homes in the community. Diagnosis rates have increased and the numbers of people known to be living with dementia has grown, especially people in the early stages of the condition. A key point of "Dementia Friendly Community" is partnerships between health and social care system, government bodies, local businesses, NGOs and civil society organisations.