



## Welcome

to the winter edition of the newsletter for the eMEN e-mental health project, funded through the Interreg North West European Innovation Programme.

eMEN is a six country e-mental health project with a value of €5.36million (approximately £4.5million), which will run until November 2019. This project is being led by the Netherlands with partners in Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland and the UK who combine technological, clinical, research, and policy expertise. Information and contact details for the partners are available on the project website.

## What has been happening in 2017?

In 2017 the e-mental health innovation and transnational implementation platform North West Europe (eMEN) has been able to generate a lot of traction in the 6 partners countries, the UK, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Ireland.

One of the main objectives of this unique initiative is to gather and share e-mental health implementation knowledge and information. The eMEN co-operation platform will sustain this

knowledge and will actively promote e-mental health in Europe by addressing the many multidisciplinary implementation challenges.

With our two conferences, four seminars, stakeholder meetings and (social) media activities in 2017 we have been able to reach thousands of professionals and citizens in Europe, creating a better understanding of different implementation challenges and cultural differences. eMEN organised the first e-mental health seminar in France on June 13th, following a first seminar also organised in Belfast on April 28th.

We also made an early and successful start with some of our product pilots, which are implemented in order to better learn about the many implementation challenges we are addressing in the eMEN project; such as product quality (clinical effectiveness, costs effective evaluation, privacy, CE compliance, 'look & feel'), product development (co-creation SMEs), awareness and acceptance, organisational priority, digital skills, eHealth policies, training and curricula and 'blended care' protocols.

This multidisciplinary approach contributes to the many positive reactions from different stakeholders. To move the implementation of this technology forward, all mental health stakeholders must work together.

## **The First eMEN Event in Germany**

In October the first eMEN event in Germany took place within the context of the World Congress of Psychiatry in Berlin. About 180 people came together under the theme "Getting in touch with digital interventions for mental health: practical insights for health professionals".

It aimed for an interdisciplinary exchange of health professionals and application providers. The audience consisted of health-professionals, start-up founders, students, other professionals and the interested public. Most of the visitors were health professionals and the majority were at least familiar with the topic.

The agenda comprised current research outcomes and implementation experience reports, as well as challenges and fields of work in internet interventions. A start-up slam was organised to support app developers. Our evaluation showed that the concept of the event was well received. Two thirds of participants were highly satisfied with the general course of the seminar. Suggestions for improvement relate to the organisation of breaks and the involvement of the audience after the presentation. Most popular were the presentations that showed the use of e-mental health in practice, like VR devices in psychotherapy. The highlight, however, was the start-up slam itself where applications and their handling were introduced. Seven SMEs had the possibility to introduce their product in a 5-minutes short presentation. In total 13 SMEs were provided with a stand so that participants could get in touch and get first insights in the different interventions.

The seminar was an opportunity to gain new insights in the field of e-mental health which was adopted with success. In the evaluation more than 50 % stated that their attitude towards e-mental health products and the likelihood of use improved. However, participants also see a long way to the widespread introduction of e-mental health products in practice. Barriers in the implementation are mainly seen in legal issues, reimbursement issues and data security. These are also fields of interest that remain for the upcoming seminars.

## **Transnational Policy Solution**

One important output of the eMEN project will be the development of a transnational policy solution. The work package "Transnational policy solution for e-mental health implementation" is led by LVR-IVF in Germany and aims to enhance the implementation of quality assured e-mental health products through developing and actively promoting effective and workable policy solutions for the NWE countries.

The development of policy recommendations can be seen as a series of interrelated actions. At the beginning, all relevant national and European policy documents and other literature that is dealing with e-mental health implementation, projects or initiatives will be gathered, and the respective level of e-mental health development in the NWE countries will be analyzed. Subsequently, each participating country selects and interviews national and European experts in technology, policy and legal issues as well as representatives of patient (and their relatives), organizations, health professionals and health care providers.

In the past months, each partner country has therefore performed a literature review on scientific studies (national or regional), policy solutions, public documents, legislations and opinion papers concerning e-mental health. On the European level, relevant EU e-(mental) health policies and initiatives, such as the eHealth Network, the EU Green paper on mobile health, the Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), have been identified. On the national level, several initiatives and projects on e-mental health have been gathered, whereas policy documents addressing e-mental health are quite rare.

While this state of lacking policy documents, quality standards and regulations makes clear that a lot has yet to be achieved within the field of e-mental health, it remains a challenge to formulate a common ground for e-mental health implementation. Hence, each country is currently performing interviews with relevant stakeholder groups, aiming to set the ground for the development of a successful transnational policy solution. The gathered information will build the basis for the recommendations in the transnational policy solution, which will address challenges, differences and similarities on the national and transnational level, and will be actively promoted through meetings, seminars and conferences.

Are you interested in making a change and contributing to the development of the policy solution? Contact the eMEN project leader Oyono Vlijter via [o.vlijter@arq.org](mailto:o.vlijter@arq.org) or connect to the eMEN team on LinkedIn!

## Interviews with experts

Over the course of the year we have recorded a handful of podcast interviews whilst at our events across Europe. They consist of discussions with experts working in the field of e-mental health.

The interviews largely examine current projects and accomplishments, for example; Reach out Australia (targeting the online mental health service for young people and their parents), Selfapy (online courses targeting depression, anxiety and eating disorders), The Wimingo Project (a self-guided program examining Shy Bladder Syndrome) and Bluebird Technologies (A smartphone app aimed at the prevention of psychological crisis).

Other topics of focus include; digital innovations in health and social care (specifically focusing on participation, co-design and co-production), rehabilitation and cognitive remediation along with the mental health reform helping people understand and control the digital world.

The podcasts are available on our website and can be found at [soundcloud.com/emen\\_eu](https://soundcloud.com/emen_eu)

The eMEN partners will further develop the eMEN platform during the project phase. To confirm your interest you can join the eMEN platform by filling in the registration form on our website.

2018 will be an exciting year for eMEN because we will show the implement of our pilots with full speed and we will organise a large number of events to promote e-mental health.

Mental health care must be accessible and affordable for the growing number of European citizens which are dealing with mental health problems. We can achieve this with high quality e-mental health.

See you at our events in 2018!

## Upcoming FREE transnational events

Each of the 6 countries will host one conference and three seminars: a total of 24 transnational events. The 2017 events will introduce participants to e-mental health and showcase products. Together they will address all aspects of e-mental health to achieve evidence based innovation, quality, access and scale.

**Belgium: 23 February** 'Ethics and Beyond CBT'

**France (Lille): 30 March** 'New roles for therapists and the empowerment of service users'

**Netherlands: April** 'e-mental health curriculum development and training for professionals'

**Edinburgh: May** 'Place based approaches to the use of digital technologies for mental health'

**Germany: June** 'e-Mental Health Policy in Europe: results from eMEN policy mapping'

**Belgium: September** 'Wearables'

**Germany: October** 'e-Mental Health Policy in Europe: developing policy recommendations'

**Ireland: November**

**France (Rennes): December** 'Future developments in e-mental health'

**London: December** 'Public Mental Health: the role of digital technologies role in preventing mental health problems'

We welcome invitations to contribute to your event. Partner contact information for the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland and the United Kingdom is available at <http://www.nweurope.eu/emen>.