

Impact on COVID-19 on Work Package 4

Work Package 4 is drafting study documents for the second part of the project, which concerns healthcare professionals. Two studies are planned:

- An interview study to explore the perspective of healthcare workers on older adult vaccination and their information seeking behavior regarding vaccination.
- A network analysis to gain insight in the network surrounding healthcare workers concerning their information seeking behavior with regards to vaccination.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is highly unlikely that we will be able to enroll any healthcare workers for these studies in the immediate future. However, we anticipate that with an extension of at least 6 months, the study can start at a later date. In the meantime, all study documents will be prepared and approvals from the different Medical Ethical Committees will be obtained so the inclusion of participants can start as soon as possible. To facilitate this process as much as possible, questions that might require detailed evaluation by Medical Ethical Committees will be taken out of the topic list and questionnaires. When it starts, enrolment will take approximately one month. By interviewing healthcare workers by phone instead of face-to-face, we hope to facilitate enrolment.

This study among healthcare workers gives us the opportunity to explore the perspective of healthcare workers on vaccinating against COVID-19, for both themselves and older adults, as well as their information needs when a new vaccine is introduced. Extra questions about this will be added to the topic list and questionnaire. This will provide valuable insight, in "real time", on how to support healthcare workers in pandemic situations.

If it turns out that this study cannot be conducted at all, we will be dependent on published literature. However, a rapid search showed that there are few articles on information-seeking behavior of healthcare professionals or their networks. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the project that these studies are conducted.

Additional COVID-19 related activities

For Work Package 4, we would like to propose two additional COVID related activities.

- Together with Work Package 2, we would like to explore potential changes in the healthcare seeking behavior of the older adults by adding a questionnaire to the data collection of Work Package 2. Due to the high workload in hospitals because of the COVID-pandemic, most regular care has been postponed in countries where we are conducting our work. However, from earlier data collected in Work Package 4, older adults are also in contact with healthcare workers outside of the hospital. Therefore, it would be valuable to explore what the impact is of the COVID-19 pandemic on the healthcare seeking behavior of older adults. This can identify potential shifts in the healthcare use of older adults during infectious disease pandemics to map capacity needs.
- The second additional activity we would like to propose are additional focus groups. In the first year of Work Package 4 we conducted a focus group study to explore the perspective of older adult on vaccination and identify their information needs. One of the reasons people accept vaccination was the severity of the disease and one of the reasons to decline vaccination was low perceived susceptibility. With the present COVID pandemic, views on vaccination might have changed or be more pronounced, based on the higher mortality and prevalence rates among elderly specifically for COVID-19. By conducting additional focus groups, we would like to explore the perspective on potential vaccines aiming to protect older adults against emerging diseases (such as Covid-19). And more importantly, we anticipate that this study will increase the body of knowledge on how to tailor information provision for older adults regarding potential use of pandemic vaccines.

Due to earlier difficulties in recruiting participants, using panels would be a quick way to organize these focus groups. However, this will require extra budget of €15000 in the Netherlands. The feasibility of conducting additional focus groups in Hungary, France and Italy and the additional costs have yet to be determined.