

HOPE Agora 2019

Evidence-informed decision-making in healthcare management

From 2 to 4 June 2019, the Association of Health Institutions of Slovenia welcomed the HOPE Agora 2019 in Ljubljana. The two-day conference closed the 2019 HOPE Exchange Programme.



Since 1981, HOPE has been organising this Exchange Programme for hospital professionals, which is pivotal in achieving HOPE objective of promoting the exchange of knowledge and expertise within the European Union. It offers a chance for participants to receive invaluable experience from hospital and healthcare professionals across Europe. The HOPE Exchange Programme lasts four weeks during which participants investigated how this topic is developed in their host country and present together their findings at the event.

More than 300 persons attended the event including the 123 HOPE Exchange participants from 23 European countries. The focus of the conference was on “Evidence-informed decision-making in healthcare management”. The participants of the HOPE exchange programme discussed the role of different types and sources of evidence. The point of view of researchers, policy-makers, managers and many other stakeholders was also considered. In increasingly complex health systems, the ability to use all types of available evidence to improve decision-making in healthcare is crucial to ensure that citizens are offered the best care possible. Scientific literature is an important source of information. However, decisions are also influenced by local data, stakeholders’ positions, cultural factors, etc.

On 2 June, the HOPE Liaison Officers met during the afternoon to discuss population health, value-based medicines, patient safety, study tours, EU projects Medeye and Euriphi and EU policies. Other participants could register before the welcome reception.

On 3 June, HOPE President Eva Weinreich-Jensen opened the conference stressing out that the shared knowledge generated thanks to the HOPE Exchange Programme ultimately benefits the patients. Three high-level speakers welcomed the participants and the audience of the HOPE Agora 2019: Aleš Šabeder, Minister of Health of the Republic of Slovenia, emphasized the difficulty of an extended autonomy in decision-making, in politics as well as any other area such as healthcare. Marjan Pintar, Director of the Association of Health Institutions of Slovenia and Marjan Sušelj, General Director of the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia wished good luck to all the participants.

In addition to the presentations made by the HOPE exchange programme participants, several experts addressed the audience.

The Module 1 “Setting the scene: Is evidence helpful for management and governance of health institutions?” consisted in two presentations: “Evidence – informed healthcare management” presented by Dorjan Marušič, Minister of Health of the Republic of Slovenia 2010–2011. He stressed out that in health systems, quality and safety should prevail on productivity. Petra Došenović Bonča, Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana addressed the “Incentives for evidence-informed management in public healthcare organisations” and focused on the difference between efficiency and effectiveness: should we maximize outputs with given resources or minimize resources for a given output?

After a first round of country presentations, the second module addressed the topic: “What can we do to improve evidence-informed decision-making”. A first presentation dealt with the

Slovenian experience in evidence-informed management and more precisely: “Smart System of Integrated Health Care and Home Care – Evidence-based chronic disease management and Home Care” presented by Dominika Oroszy, University Medical Centre Ljubljana and Peter Pustatičnik, Telekom Slovenije.

Then Tanja Kuchenmüller, Knowledge Management, Evidence and Research for Policy-Making Unit, Division of Information, Evidence, Research and Innovation, World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe remotely presented “Evidence-informed health policy network (EVIPNet) Europe and evidence-informed health policy-making”. How to integrate research into policy? She showed how to promote improved health systems through a networked structure and knowledge translation.

Finally, Ellen Nolte, Department of Health Services Research and Policy, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, made a presentation entitled “Learning from elsewhere: what we know, what we don’t know and what we should know”. She stressed the importance of definitions to allow for a meaningful comparability and of the impact of national contexts.

In the afternoon, after a second round of country presentations, the Module 3 – “Where are we now?” was addressed. First, Niek Klazinga Amsterdam UMC, University of Amsterdam, presented “From measurement to change”. How effective are healthcare organisations in using data? He presented an EU-US comparison. Then, Dušan Keber International consultant, addressed “Evidence – informed healthcare management: a side view”. He develops examples from pharmaceuticals and healthcare policy reform in Croatia. Were the decisions evidence-based? He also underlined that different sources of evidence are used in private and public healthcare organisations. A third round of country presentations by HOPE Exchange Programme participants closed the day, allowing for a meeting of the HOPE National Coordinators while the rest of the audience got ready for the conference dinner.

Urmas Sule, Vice-President of HOPE, chaired the last day of the HOPE Agora 2019. Following the final round of presentations of HOPE Exchange participants, a workshop on the use of management tools in healthcare organisations was organised by Damir Ivanković and Niek Klazinga, Amsterdam UMC, University of Amsterdam. 125 full responses to their survey were collected among HOPE Exchange participants prior to the event. They also questioned the audience in live on its use of performance data for management in healthcare and discussed the results with a panel of participants.

It was followed by a Round table discussion with Tanja Španić, Europa Donna Slovenia, Niek Klazinga, Amsterdam UMC, University of Amsterdam, Saša Kadivec, University Clinic of

Respiratory and Allergic Diseases Golnik and Teodor Žepič, University Medical Centre Ljubljana. The discussion was moderated by Mircha Poldrugovac, Amsterdam UMC, University of Amsterdam.

Finally, Pascal Garel, chief executive of HOPE, chaired the Prize Giving Ceremony and gave the final words of the HOPE Agora 2018. He congratulated the 3 winning teams: United-Kingdom for the 3rd prize, Switzerland for the 2nd prize and Spain for the 1st prize.

The HOPE Governors met at the end of the conference to discuss many issues including, comparative activities, EU Finnish Presidency, Brexit, EU policies such as the Medical Devices Regulations, the Falsified Medicines Directive, data protection regulation, e-privacy and EU projects EURIPHI and MedEye. They also gathered to prepare and discuss the HOPE EU Elections 2019 Manifesto which advocates for more coherent EU health-related policies that would be centred on public health and a better check of their impact on hospitals and healthcare facilities.

