

The 10th International
Multidisciplinary Research Conference

SOCIETY HEALTH WELFARE

ABSTRACTS

26-28 March 2025
Riga, Latvia

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An Eco-Social Work and Promoting Community Resilience

EU-Supported International Volunteering for Youth: Critical Evaluation of Factors Affecting Youth Participation in Latvia

Oral

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Objectives*

The European Solidarity Corps is an EU-funded programme that supports international voluntary work, either domestically or abroad, local community resilience and wellbeing. It serves as a platform through which the EU promotes one of its core values: youth participation, essential for democracy and good governance. Despite its potential, recent surveys in Latvia indicate it is the least-known EU youth-related programme. The lack of publicly available information raises questions about the programme’s effectiveness. The aim is to examine the accessibility of the programme for Latvian youth and to identify the factors needed to improve youth engagement, perceptions and recognition of international voluntary work in the EU.

Materials and Methods

Policy analysis consists of data available from the European Youth Portal and National Agency for International Programs for Youth, the Ministry of Welfare and other policy-related data. Five expert interviews are conducted with leading organizations, and 10 semi-structured interviews with outgoing and incoming youth volunteers.

Results

An estimation of more than 30 active leading organizations with 40+ completed projects with more than 80 activities implemented attracting at least 300 volunteers between 2021-2024 representing a broad scope of community activities. Interviews highlight both problems (such as the differing amounts of funding granted, lack of competition during the selection process, and issues concerning the acculturation process) and opportunities (including networking, inclusive communities, and additional brain gain) associated with the programme.

Conclusions

The international volunteering activities available for youth in Latvia involves interrelation between personal and community factors (engagement), and potential obstacles leading to the low recognition and participation rates. The Latvian context provides valuable insights into how the programme could be improved internationally to raise its recognition of eco-social work, and attract more participants to the development of resilient communities.

Keywords. youth, international volunteering, European Solidarity Corps, Latvia, policy analysis, community, resilience.

Improving Social Care Services: Study on Quality-of-Life Factors in Social Care Institution

Oral

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Objectives*

The study examines factors affecting clients' quality of life at Riga Municipality Social Care Center “Gailezers,” focusing on six domains: autonomy, relationships, activities, environment, food, and quality of care. It identifies variations based on demographics, language, room occupancy, a.o., aiming to propose actionable recommendations for improving service content and delivery.

Materials and Methods

Three methods were used: interviews with 95 clients, a focus group with six staff members, and a one-week covert observation of clients. A checklist adapted from Johs-Artisensi and Hansen guided evaluations across six quality-of-life domains. Clients were selected based on cognitive and physical abilities, with observations offering deeper insights. Statistical analysis explored differences in quality-of-life ratings by room occupancy and demographics.

Results

The “Relationship” factor received the highest client ratings, while the “Environment” factor scored lowest, especially among older clients, revealing inadequacies in the institution's physical and social settings. Shared room occupants reported significantly lower quality-of-life scores ($p = 0.003$), contrasting with staff views that shared rooms promote communication. Staff emphasized privacy's importance and suggested limiting room sharing to two clients.

Observations revealed diverse environmental conditions and discomfort among clients. Dissatisfaction stemmed from meal monotony and caregivers' heavy workloads, impacting service quality. Staff attributed limited meal variety to resource constraints but deemed catering generally adequate. Participation in activities depended on clients' psychological states, with initial encouragement often yielding positive outcomes. Feedback stressed the need for outdoor opportunities, customizable meals, and greater engagement from relatives.

Conclusions

The findings highlight key areas for improving quality of life in social care institutions. Enhancing privacy, comfort, and meal variety, along with reducing room occupancy, is essential. Balancing shared spaces for socialization with clients' need for privacy is crucial. Addressing caregiver workloads, tailoring activities to preferences, and encouraging family engagement can further improve care quality, fostering a more client-centered environment and elevating overall satisfaction.

Migrant Carers for the Elderly and their Families Left Behind: Societal Challenges in an Ageing Europe Shaping Transnational Family Dynamics

Oral

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Objectives*

Objective of this paper is to explore how the dynamics of 24h carers temporarily migrating from Latvia to Austria, can be analysed in a participatory and holistic approach, touching upon legal frameworks of migration as well as on individual perceptions of losses and gains concerning family life, and on the impact of this temporary migration and work in the care sector on health and well-being for all family members.

Materials and Methods

A cooperation of researchers in Latvia and Austria was facilitated by the European COST Action 21143 Transnational Family Dynamics (TraFaDy). In this cooperation, existing interview data on Latvian women migrating to Austria and working as care-givers in private households as well as existing data on legal frameworks and practices of care in Austria are used as a basis to develop a conceptual framework for conducting a case study.

Results

Preliminary Results demonstrate that care for the elderly in Europe is an urgent matter that affects all age groups and in different ways. The challenge of providing good care for an ageing population in Europe can only be successfully met with intersectoral dialogue.

Conclusions

Study demonstrates the perceptions of the gains and losses in the family life of care workers. The study shows the impact on the physical and mental health and well-being of all family members. This work addresses critical challenges posed by Europe's ageing population, including the reliance on migrant caregivers in private care settings to fill labour gaps and support elderly individuals in their preferred environments.

Burnout and Individual Characteristics in Elementary School Teachers

Poster

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Objectives*

Burnout syndrome is a prevalent issue among helping professionals, including teachers. This study aimed to investigate the correlation between burnout and specific individual characteristics of elementary school teachers in Slovakia. By examining factors such as ambition, optimism, resilience, flexibility, and self-protection, we sought to identify potential predictors of burnout among this population.

Materials and Methods

A quantitative research design was employed. Data were collected from 150 elementary school teachers in Slovakia using a snowball sampling technique. The Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT), a 23-item self-report measure developed by Schaufeli, Desart, and De Witte (2020), was utilized to assess burnout. Additionally, a questionnaire was administered to collect data on participants' individual characteristics. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS 22, and correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships between burnout and the identified individual characteristics.

Results

The findings revealed a significant negative correlation between resilience and burnout. This suggests that teachers with higher levels of resilience were less likely to experience burnout symptoms. Resilience, characterized by emotional stability and cognitive flexibility, emerged as a protective factor against burnout.

Conclusions

This study contributes to the existing literature on burnout among teachers by examining the role of individual characteristics in predicting burnout among Slovak elementary school teachers. The findings emphasize the importance of resilience as a protective factor against burnout and provide valuable insights for the development of interventions aimed at preventing and mitigating burnout among teachers.

Circular Economy – Response to Climate Change

Poster

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Objectives*

Circular economy - an economic system aimed at eliminating waste and continuous use of resources. It includes sharing, reusing, repairing, renovating and recycling to create a closed system. All waste becomes a resource or raw material for the next process, thus contrasting with the traditional or linear economy, in which the production model is take - make - use - throw away.

Municipalities influence outcomes most – by setting an example and shaping the environment.

Considering Latvia's unique characteristics and the role of local governments in the circular economy, their importance has been established.

This article will discuss the methodology developed and the results of the first Latvian Circular Economy Index. It is commendable that all Latvian municipalities have been evaluated.

Materials and Methods

The methodology includes municipality self-assessment and population surveys. The resident's survey was conducted online (CAWI) using a closed, representative respondent panel. It asked residents about the municipality's and their own activities in the field of circular economy.

Results

The Circular Economy Index for municipalities, developed for the first time in Latvia, will provide an opportunity to self-assess the processes and results in the work of institutions, organizations and municipalities. It will also be possible to follow the dynamics of your performance by years or periods and compare it with the results of others. At the same time, it will be possible to receive expert recommendations on priority processes to be improved, as well as promote success stories and examples of good practice.

Conclusions

Based on the self-assessment and index methodology, it will be possible to better understand the role of the circular economy in the work of institutions and organizations, in the performance of municipal functions, and cooperation with interested parties.

Recommendations for more responsible behaviour, support mechanisms and fundraising are available for municipalities.

Factors Affecting Independent Living of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in Community-Based Social Services in Latvia

Poster

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Objectives*

The transition from institutional to community-based care is essential to safeguard the fundamental rights of persons with intellectual disabilities (ID). The inclusion of persons with ID in society is one of the priorities clearly defined in the Equality Chapter of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. In Latvia, the implementation of the Deinstitutionalisation Plan, initiated in 2017, was completed in 2023. However, the quality of life (QoL) of persons with ID—particularly their recognition and ability to participate in society—remains hindered by residual institutionalised practices. The aim of this study is to explore, from the perspectives of persons with ID, the domains of QoL, with a particular focus on those that enhance autonomy and independent living. The QoL domains were defined according to Schalock et al.’s (2010) conceptual model, which includes: *personal development* (e.g., daily activities and adaptive behaviour), *self-determination* (e.g., personal choice, decision-making), *interpersonal relationships* (e.g., social activities and friendships), *social inclusion* (e.g., involvement in community activities), *rights, emotional, physical, and material well-being*. A Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and beliefs of persons with ID and to gather further information about living conditions in community-based care in the Vidzeme region, specifically in five group housing services. Additionally, expert interviews and focus group discussions with service providers and stakeholders were conducted to understand the effect of DI in Latvia. The study revealed discrepancies between service providers’ expectations and actual capabilities of persons with ID. Individuals who previously lived in institutions highly value group housing facilities, appreciating aspects such as managing their own financial resources and engaging in cultural and social life outside of care. Nevertheless, they are often excluded from everyday decision-making processes, such as planning daily activities, setting menus, or organising events they wish to attend.

Methods and Tools to Improving Socio-Emotional Learning Skills for Implementing Socio-Pedagogical Activities of a Social Worker in the Community

Poster

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Objectives*

To assess and compare the importance of acquiring social-emotional learning skills (SEL), methods and tools in the implementation of socio-pedagogical activities in the study process and in the professional environment, as assessed by students and graduates of the program "Social Work" (SW).

Materials and Methods

A mixed-type study was conducted. Students and graduates of the SW study program filled out a questionnaire, participated in a discussion of opinions, and assessed the importance of the skills (including SEL skills - understanding oneself, managing oneself, understanding others, relationship skills, making responsible decisions), methods, and tools necessary for the implementation of socio-pedagogical activities in the community.

Results

The importance of SEL skills in the implementation of socio-pedagogical activities differs in the assessment of SW students and program graduates. Students focus their activities more on skills related to self-understanding and management, graduates - on relationship skills, responsible decision-making, as well as carrying out preventive and educational activities to promote community resilience. Differences were also found in the respondents' opinions regarding the choice of appropriate methods and tools. The most important thematic directions and areas for the implementation of socio-pedagogical activities were prioritized.

Conclusions

In order to encourage the development of responsible decision-making skills already during the study process, the timely acquisition and integration of SEL skills plays an important role.

Study projects that develop SEL skills and are focused on a specific target audience, as well as purposefully selected methods and tools, help in the implementation of SW socio-pedagogical activities in the professional environment.

It is necessary to summarize existing experience and develop methodological training material for carrying out social-pedagogical activities in the community, for future and existing SW professionals, as well as to expand the research, covering a wider range of respondents.

Relationship between Teachers' Resilience, Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment in Low SES Schools

Poster

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Objectives*

The resilience is the ability of employees to use their resources to successfully adapt and flourish in a changing environment at work, even when faced with challenges and difficult circumstances (Näswall et al., 2015). The employee's resilience is particularly relevant in a work context that is full of challenges, complex tasks and changes as teacher's job. Therefore, it is especially important for teachers to be resilient. Teachers with high resilience are more positive, more self-confident, express more optimism and positive emotions, cope more easily with challenges and pressure at work, recover faster from failures and help students' learn more successfully (Liu et al., 2021; Wang, 2021). Another two factors which are important for teachers' wellbeing, job quality and intention to stay in their profession are job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Unfortunately, there is still little research analysing teachers' resilience, job satisfaction and commitment in low SES schools. To address this gap this study asks the following question: how is teachers' who work in low SES schools resilience associated with their job satisfaction and organizational commitment?

Materials and Methods

The research performed in 23 schools from 9 municipalities with low SES contexts in Lithuania and 311 teachers participated in the study. The *Employee Resilience Scale* (Näswall, Kuntz and Malinen, 2015), the *Michigan Organisational Assessment Questionnaire* (Fichman, Jenkins and Klesh, 1975), and the *Organisational Commitment Scale* (Balfour and Wechsler, 1996) were used in this quantitative research

Results

The results of the study show that teachers in the low SES schools have high levels of job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation, but their resilience is not strongly expressed. It can be seen that all three variables have statistically significant moderate positive correlations with each other.

Conclusions

Conclusion: it is important to develop teachers' resilience because it is related with higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Social Significance of Visual Art in Asylum Seeker Centers

Poster

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Objectives*

Over the past decade, with the rapid increase in global migration, there has been a growing need for social work with refugees and asylum seekers. This study is the first attempt in Lithuania to explore the application of art methods to help forced migrants live with dignity while enduring the limbo situation in asylum seekers centers awaiting a decision on their legal status.

The aim of this article is to theoretically and empirically explore the potential of visual art as a tool for providing psychosocial support to asylum seekers.

Objectives: 1. To analyze visual art methods and practices in providing support to asylum seekers. 2. To empirically examine the social significance of applying visual art methods in social work with target group.

Research question: What is the social significance of visual art as perceived by practitioners conducting these activities in asylum seeker centers?

Materials and Methods

A qualitative study was conducted to reveal the aim of the research, utilizing semi-structured interviews with one social worker and three art educators. The data were analyzed using content analysis.

Results

The study highlighted the psychosocial value of visual art, offering emotional support, overcoming language barriers, and encouraging self-expression. Participants used art to share personal stories, reflect on the past, assess their present, and envision the future. Art activities improved community dynamics, enhanced relationships, reduced tensions, and created a safer space for sharing and resolving conflicts. Collective engagement and publicizing artistic outcomes helped reduce social exclusion and supported broader societal integration.

Conclusions

Visual art interventions help asylum seekers access internal resources, maintain their identity, develop critical thinking, and reflect. Various art forms can motivate language learning and support community integration. Consistent use of visual arts, along with sharing artistic outcomes, empowers asylum seekers and raises awareness of forced migration, promoting mutual understanding, tolerance, and social change.

Social-Emotional Learning Skills for Implementing Socio-Pedagogical Activities in Social Work

Poster

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Objectives*

To evaluate and compare the importance of acquiring emotional learning skills (SEL) in the implementation of socio-pedagogical activities in the study process and professional activities as assessed by students and graduates of the program "Social Work".

Materials and Methods

A total of 152 students and graduates of the study program "Social Work" (SW) filled out a questionnaire, assessing the importance of the skills (including SEL skills - understanding oneself, managing oneself, understanding others, relationship skills, making responsible decisions), methods and tools necessary for the implementation of socio-pedagogical activities.

Results

The importance of SEL skills in the implementation of socio-pedagogical activities differs between SW students and program graduates. Students focus their activities more on skills related to self-understanding and management, graduates - on relationship skills and responsible decision-making. Differences were also found in the respondents' opinions regarding the selection of appropriate methods and tools.

Conclusions

In order to encourage the development of responsible decision-making skills already during the study process, the timely acquisition and integration of SEL skills plays an important role. Study projects that develop SEL skills and are focused on a specific target audience, as well as purposefully selected methods and tools, help in the implementation of SW socio-pedagogical activities in the professional environment.

Transition from Work to Retirement in the Baltic States

Poster

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Objectives*

The objective of this study is to assess the transition from work to retirement in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, the legal regulation of early, deferred and flexible retirement, the patterns of use of these options by the Baltic population, the employment of the pre- and post-retirement age groups and the factors influencing their retirement choices. To identify similarities and differences between the three Baltic States and between the Baltic States and other Member States; to identify examples of good practice that can be transferred from other states to Latvia.

Materials and Methods

The methods include desk research on the normative regulation and existing academic literature on the transition from work to retirement in different countries; analysis of statistical data from the social insurance agencies of the three Baltic States, Eurostat and the analysis of microdata from the SHARE survey.

Results

While most people withdraw from labour market at reaching the pensionable age, a considerable proportion of workers use early retirement or stay in full or partial employment after the statutory age. The Baltic countries are those with the highest employment rate for people aged 65+. Willingness for early retirement positively correlates with having a physically demanding job and negatively - with job satisfaction, and with the financial situation in household. It is also highly dependent on the sector of economy: in Latvia, the lowest share of early-retirement seekers observed in wholesale and retail trade (24.9%) and public administration (27.6%). Health and social work employees were slightly below the country average (36.4%), while people employed in education and agriculture, demonstrated a relatively high degree of willingness to retire as early as possible (47.3% and 49.6% respectively), as well as those employed in transport (49.9%) and manufacturing (49.8%).

Conclusions

Flexible retirement pathways are widely used in the Baltic states, but there are considerable differences between the countries.

Utilising Community Potential in Social Work during Civil-Military Threats

Poster

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Objectives*

Social workers play a vital role in strengthening resilience in individuals facing adverse situations, including crises. Recent experiences, such as responding to COVID-19, floods, and wildfires, have highlighted their importance. However, civil-military threats, now more relevant in the context of Russia's war in Ukraine, require new competencies. This raises questions about social workers' professional resilience and their ability to respond effectively. Aim of the study is to analyse the role of social workers in promoting community resilience during crises involving civil-military threats and to assess the potential of community trust and cooperation as resources for crisis management.

Materials and Methods

The study is based on (1) an analysis of the Baltic States Society Resilience Survey (2023); (2) a comparison of responsibilities assigned to social workers in the National Civil Protection (CP) Plan with competencies outlined in the Social Work Professional Standards; and (3) an evaluation of municipal CP plans.

Results

The study shows that 58% of respondents feel the current societal situation causes insecurity, 45% are satisfied with their local government's work, 53% trust people in their community, and 74% are willing to collaborate with others in their area. This indicates a cohesive community foundation that can serve as a resource in responding to civil-military threats. However, Social Work Professional Standards lack essential competencies required for civil-military crises, including crisis management, community resilience building, and trauma support. This may limit social workers' ability to effectively respond to such situations.

Conclusions

Strengthening community resilience, engaging residents, and mobilizing resources are integral to social work during civil-military threats. Social workers need enhanced skills in crisis management and community mobilization. Developing a framework, including special training for social workers' knowledge, skills, and competencies in civil-military contexts is essential to fully utilize community trust and cooperation as a resource.

Behaviour Models in Health Communication

Psychosocial Work Environment Factors, Employee' Subjective Well-Being, and Sick Leave: Multivariate Analysis

Poster

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Objectives*

Employee well-being, working conditions, and sick leave are critical factors that influence organizational success. The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between different psychosocial factors and sick leave days among employees.

Materials and Methods

The study, conducted from June to September 2024, involved organizations from various sectors. A total of 1,631 employees participated by self-assessing statements related to various psychosocial factors through an online survey. Each company's human resources department provided the number of sick leave days for each survey participant, integrated them into a data set in an anonymized format, adhering to data security requirements. The data was analyzed using the following methods: Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation, Mann-Whitney test, correlation analysis, linear and multinomial regression analysis.

Results

Subjective well-being was assessed by extracting a factor using the WHO approach (5 statements, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.900$) and PCA with Varimax rotation (8 statements, $\alpha = 0.903$). Observations with extreme sick leave values (z -score > 1.96) were removed from the data set.

The Mann-Whitney test revealed statistically significant differences between groups with low and high subjective well-being ($U = 244,804$, $p = 0.023$). The mean rank for employees with low well-being ($N = 624$) was 761, compared to a mean rank of 712 for employees with high well-being ($N = 841$).

The linear multifactor regression model ($F(3, 1486) 14.038$; $p < 0.001$; Durbin-Watson = 2.002) identified the following statistically significant factors influencing sick leave:

- Health risks ($b = 1.8$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI: 0.894 – 2.634)
- Work intensity ($b = 1.5$, $p = 0.025$, 95% CI: 0.187 – 2,809)
- Autonomy ($b = -1.0$, $p = 0.046$, 95% CI: -2.026 – -0.017)

Conclusions

Working conditions and employees' subjective well-being are also important dimensions of quality of life that affect employee sick leave.

Challenging Occupational Psychoemotional Risks

Association between Workplace Environment and Self-Esteem in the Population of Latvian Radiographers and Radiology Assistants

Oral

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Objectives*

A supportive environment where employees feel valued and respected can enhance their sense of self-worth, leading to greater job satisfaction and productivity. This study aims to examine how leadership quality, social support, and respect within the workplace correlate with employees' self-esteem.

Materials and Methods

A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted between March and September 2024. The study population consisted of 100 Latvian radiographers and radiology assistants who voluntarily completed an anonymous electronic self-report questionnaire. The questionnaire included questions on demographic data, the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, and the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire II (medium version). Correlations between workplace factors such as leadership quality, social support from supervisor, acknowledgment, equity and respect, and employees' self-esteem were assessed. Statistical analysis (Spearman's correlation) was performed using IBM SPSS 29.0.

Results

Among the participants of this study 89%(n=89) were women, 51%(n=51) were radiology assistants, and 49%(n=49) were radiographers. 52%(n=52) of participants worked at one workplace, 33%(n=33) had two jobs, 12%(n=12) had three jobs and 3%(n=3) of participants worked at four different workplaces. 61%(n=61) of respondents worked only in public institutions, 12%(n=12) worked only in private institutions, 27%(n=27) worked both in public and private institutions. The level of self-esteem was obtained: 13%(n=13) had low, 35%(n=35) - moderate, and 52%(n=52) - high self-esteem. Statistically significant moderate positive correlations were found between leadership quality ($\rho=0.44$, $p<0.001$), acknowledgment ($\rho=0.43$, $p<0.001$), equity and respect ($\rho=0.45$, $p<0.001$), and self-esteem. A statistically significant weak positive correlation was found between social support from supervisor ($\rho=0.39$, $p<0.001$) and employees' self-esteem.

Conclusions

The findings of this study support the hypothesis that workplace factors (leadership quality, social support, acknowledgment, equity and respect) are positively correlated with self-esteem.

Employees’ Perceived Risks of Digitalisation in the Workplace

Oral

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1. Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences

Objectives*

As workplaces are increasingly digitalized, employees are reacting to these processes differently. Work tasks are being digitalized to help employees work more efficiently. However, it’s also true that some employees may have concerns or fears about these innovations. Therefore, we raise the question: which employees feel the most risk from digitalization in the workplace (comparing workers’ human capital, sector, and working conditions)? It would help to provide tailored support to these individuals.

Materials and Methods

The open-access dataset OSH Pulse—Occupational Safety and Health in post-pandemic Workplaces (conducted in 2022) was used for the analysis. The sample: N=27242, 45,7 % females; the geography - EU27. The age range: 16-87, and the mean age was 42,8. Descriptive and advanced statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software.

Results

The study’s results revealed that 9 out of 10 employees in EU27 in 2022 had to use at least the basic digital skills in the workplace. Risk perception varied depending on the employee’s health, age, and education. Many employees felt that the application of digital gadgets determined the speed or pace of their work (56.9 %), resulted in them working alone (43.8 %), and surveillance of them at work increased (42 %). Because of digital technologies, a fifth (20.3 %) of employees felt reduced autonomy at work.

Conclusions

The results of this study provide valuable insights for the development and implementation of corporate digitalization strategies, as well as for HR managers, occupational safety specialists, and other stakeholders. Despite some limitations (the research sample is skewed towards employees with higher education, and the cross-sectional research design only allows us to speak about correlations, not causes), the findings of this study can serve as a solid foundation for future research and strategy development in the field of workplace digitalization.

Psychometric Characteristics of the Slovak Version of the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT)

Oral

*Dr. Júlia Bačkorová*¹

1. Catholic University in Ružomberok

Objectives*

The main objective of the study is to adapt and validate the Slovak version of the Burnout Assessment Tool.

Materials and Methods

The online version of the BAT questionnaire was completed by 1 085 teachers from primary and secondary schools in Slovakia. The obtained empirical data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Through confirmatory factor analysis, we validated the structure of the research instrument. We examined its validity in the context of job demand resources (JDR) theory and the expected relationships between burnout syndrome and job resources and demands.

Results

We hypothesize confirmation of the characteristics of the second-order factor model, in which the four primary symptoms are predicted by a single factor. This model corresponds to a view of burnout as a syndrome consisting of four types of difficulties with a common denominator, burnout.

Conclusions

The study is devoted to the validation of the Slovak version of the instrument for measuring burnout syndrome BAT, which has already been validated in several countries, on the basis of which we can conclude that it is a factorially stable, valid and reliable instrument, which has the potential to obtain reliable data and offers the possibility of comparison with other countries.

Techno-insecurity Among Working Women in Latvia

Oral

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Objectives*

Generative AI adoption is surpassing earlier technological shifts like PCs and the Internet (Bick et al., 2024). Surveys have identified women, younger workers, those with a university degree, and AI users as most concerned about job stability due to AI adoption (Lane et al., 2023). Given the significant role of perceived job insecurity on the mental health of employees (Kim & Knesebeck, 2016), this study explored techno-insecurity – concerns about job loss due to new technology – among working women in Latvia.

Materials and Methods

The study surveyed 920 working women aged 18 to 71 ($M = 43.39$, $SD = 10.41$), 90.1% with higher education. Primarily employed in healthcare (27.6%), education (20.5%), and public sector (15.3%). Occupying roles as higher-level specialists (38.6%), specialists (26.8%), and middle management (20%). Data were gathered as part of the BALANCE4LV project via an online survey (August - October 2024).

Results

17.8% of women reported concern about losing job to new technologies. Younger workers reported less concern than older generation ($p = .001$). No statistically significant differences in techno-insecurity found between AI users and nonusers. 88.6% reported being willing or rather willing to learn new skills to use new technologies, with no significant variation among groups with different levels of concern about job stability ($p = .07$) or generations ($p = .29$).

Conclusions

Contrary to prior reports, younger respondents expressed less job stability concerns, and there were no significant differences among AI users and nonusers. Which might be attributed to high education levels, existing widespread internet access and extensive digitalisation, fostering confidence and familiarity with new technology. While overall techno-insecurity among women in Latvia was lower than previously OECD-reported (22%) and willingness to acquire new skills reflects optimism for AI adoption in Latvia, targeted support might still be necessary for older workers during technological transitions.

Work-Life Balance and Musculoskeletal Pain: Insights from a Cross-Sectional Study in Latvia

Oral

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Objectives*

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between a lack of work-life balance and adverse musculoskeletal health outcomes, specifically low back and neck pain, among hired workers in a representative workforce sample from Latvia.

Materials and Methods

Computer-assisted personal interviewing was used to obtain a sample of 2,503 hired workers during the cross-sectional workforce study conducted in 2022 in Latvia. Associations were analyzed using logistic regression, with odds ratios adjusted for gender, age, and education.

Results

The analysis demonstrated a significant relationship between a lack of work-life balance and adverse musculoskeletal effects, specifically low back pain and neck pain. Among participants experiencing a lack of work-life balance (36.2%; n = 475), low back pain was reported with an adjusted odds ratio (OR) of 1.80 (95% CI: 1.34–2.41), while neck pain was associated with an adjusted OR of 2.05 (95% CI: 1.39–3.02). These findings indicate that work-life imbalance is strongly associated with an increased likelihood of developing these musculoskeletal conditions.

Conclusions

This study highlights the association between work-life balance and musculoskeletal health outcomes. The strong associations observed between a lack of work-life balance and both low back pain and neck pain emphasize the need for targeted interventions to improve work-life balance. Implementing workplace policies that prioritize employee well-being may reduce these adverse effects and enhance overall occupational health outcomes.

Funding: The project “Internal consolidation of RSU and external consolidation of RSU with LSPA” (No. 5.2.1.1.i.0/2/24/1/CFLA/005) grant “BALANCE4LV research: Assessing and Enhancing Work-Life Balance in the Latvian Context (No. RSU-PAG-2024/1-0012) is financed within the framework of the European Union Recovery and Resilience plan and the state budget.

Work-Life Balance in Remote Work: Effects of Experience, Communication, and Flexibility

Oral

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Objectives*

The aim of this study was to investigate the factors influencing work-life balance (WLB) among remote workers, emphasizing the roles of prior remote work experience, communication practices, schedule flexibility, and work-hour definitions.

Materials and Methods

A snowball sampling survey was conducted among Latvian residents from August to October 2024, gathering responses from 1175 participants. Data weighting was applied to address gender disproportionality, based on workforce age and gender distribution data from the Central Statistical Bureau. The final study sample comprised 515 remote workers aged 21–70 years (mean age 45.3 ± 12.1 years; 54.0% male, 46.0% female).

Results

Employees with pre-COVID-19 remote work experience reported higher average WLB scores (mean 7.2, median 8) compared to those who started remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic (mean 6.8, median 8) or after the pandemic (mean 7.0, median 7). Higher WLB scores (8–10 points) were observed among workers who: (1) rarely received work-related communication outside regular working hours (31.0%; $p < 0.001$), (2) had a fixed work schedule or could independently organize their work hours to complete tasks (33.6% and 32.7%, respectively; no statistically significant differences), and (3) had working hours clearly specified in their employment contracts without additional monitoring through tracking systems (73.5%; $p < 0.05$).

Conclusions

Pre-COVID-19 remote work experience was associated with higher self-reported WLB scores. Key factors contributing to improved WLB included limited work-related communication outside regular hours, autonomy in organizing work schedules, and clear, well-defined work-hour arrangements without excessive monitoring. These findings underscore the significance of flexible and structured work policies in supporting remote workers' well-being.

Funding: The project “Internal consolidation of RSU and external consolidation of RSU with LSPA” (No. 5.2.1.1.i.0/2/24/I/CFLA/005) grant “BALANCE4LV research: Assessing and Enhancing Work-Life Balance in the Latvian Context (No. RSU-PAG-2024/1-0012) is financed within the framework of the European Union Recovery and Resilience plan and the state budget.

Analysis of Development of the Latvian Society of Occupational Physicians

Poster

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Objectives*

Occupational Medicine (OM) is the speciality, covering the multi-faceted relationship between health and work. OM specialists are concerned about the work conditions risk-assessment to ensure that working people maintain their health and safety. The aim: to investigate the development of the Society of Occupational Physicians of Latvia and identify the further possibilities of the speciality.

Materials and Methods

Data from the Registry of Occupational Physicians (OP), their training documents and conference protocols.

Results

The Society of Occupational Physicians was founded 30 years ago in 1994 with the initial number 35 OP. The society was actively involved in the creation of the occupational health and service system in Latvia and has a clearly stated role within this system. Main tasks: appraisal, maintenance, restoration and improvement of workers health; compulsory health examinations of employees; training, certification, improvement of the qualification of OP and other specialists, the development of the Occupational diseases list; creation of their diagnostic, registration etc. In the following years, the number of OP increased 10 times. There are currently 298 Occupational Physicians in Latvia. This means that there are 4000 employees per one OP (in developed EU countries about 2000). It is not enough, understanding that OP ageing: one third are of retirement age, the other - pre - retirement, and only one third are of working age.

Conclusions

Considering today's complex and constantly changing working conditions, the lack of OP could be one of the reasons for the development of work-related and occupational diseases in future.

Development and Validation of Two Short Scales for Assessing Work-Related Well-Being

Poster

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Objectives*

Worker well-being and mental health have emerged as a critical area of focus, both on national and international level (European Commission, 2021; Makarevičienė et al., 2023). In order to support timely research on well-being of local workers, the objective of this study was to develop two short scales: Perceived work-related stress (PWS) scale and Work-related self-efficacy scale (WSE), for use in a new worker well-being screening tool as part of the BALANCE4LV project (Project reg.Nr. RSU-PAG-2024/1-0012).

Materials and Methods

The study involved 1175 respondents, aged 18 to 71 years ($M = 42.65$, $SD = 10.46$). Of whom 78% were female ($n = 920$), 94% consisted of salaried employees, and 87.6% had higher education. Items were developed based on well-established theoretical framework: Transactional theory of stress for PWS and Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy for WSE, and revised by RSU experts in the area of psychology and worker well-being research. Data were gathered as part of the BALANCE4LV project from the 13th of August to the 31st of October 2024 by an online survey that was distributed through social media and professional occupational organisations. Study approved by the RSU Research Ethics Committee.

Results

As a result PWS consists of three items, and WSE consists of five items, both rated on 5 point Likert scale. Exploratory factor analysis showed strong one-factor solutions in both scales (Factor loadings .693 to .883), explaining more than half of the variance (60.4% - 69.6%). PWS and WSE also showed good internal consistency ($.78 < \alpha < .83$) and acceptable item properties.

Conclusions

The results of the present study demonstrated that newly developed scales have robust psychometric properties within our sample and can be used for further research in work-related studies, particularly where brevity in questionnaires is essential. Further validation across diverse populations and settings is recommended.

Job Satisfaction among Occupational Health and Safety Experts: Insights into Sectoral and Demographic Variations

Poster

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Objectives*

Objective: This study aimed to explore job satisfaction levels among occupational health and safety experts, examining variations across demographic groups and work sectors.

Materials and Methods

Methods: This cross-sectional study included 183 certified occupational health and safety experts, predominantly female (74.9%), with varied work experience. Participants were surveyed through Redcap tool using a validated Job Satisfaction scale comprising 36 items scored on a 6-point Likert scale. Data analysis involved examining job satisfaction average scores across sectors (private and public) and demographic groups using Mann-Whitey test.

Results

Among subscales, the lowest overall mean score was observed for “Satisfaction with Pay” (M = 3.49, SD = 1.31). Three subscales had similarly high scores: “Satisfaction with Communication” (M = 4.63, SD = 0.98), “Satisfaction with Colleagues” (M = 4.63, SD = 0.94), and “Satisfaction with Supervision” (M = 4.62, SD = 1.17). Professionals working in the private sector reported a higher mean score (M = 4.09, SD = 0.81) than corporate sector professionals (M = 4.02, SD = 0.75) with significant satisfaction differences in pay (U = 1971.50, p = 0.05) and additional compensation (U = 1980.50, p = 0.05). Satisfaction levels were generally higher if experience was also higher, however, the group with the lowest mean score was reporting the highest experience. Shapiro-Wilk test revealed deviations from normality in some groups, highlighting heterogeneity in responses.

Conclusions

Job satisfaction among occupational health and safety experts is consistent across sectors, underscoring the stability of satisfaction drivers in this field. The findings suggest that experience may play a pivotal role in enhancing job satisfaction, offering actionable insights for workforce retention strategies. Future research should further investigate these dynamics to inform tailored interventions aimed at improving satisfaction and performance in occupational safety roles.

Self-Evaluation of Occupational Therapy Students on the Formation of Professional Identity and Influencing Factors

Poster

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Objectives*

This study aimed to explore occupational therapy (OT) students’ self-perception of their professional identity (PI), identify key components contributing to successful PI development, and compare PI perceptions among students at different stages of their academic journey.

Materials and Methods

A qualitative phenomenological approach was used to capture the subjective experiences of OT students regarding their PI. The study involved four focus group discussions, each comprising students from a specific academic year. A total of 18 OT students from all academic years participated in the research. The data collection and analysis were informed by a review of existing literature on professional identity formation in health professions.

Results

The study revealed that OT students possess an awareness of PI and are capable of assessing its development. Distinct differences in self-perception of PI were noted across academic years:

- **First-year students** described their PI as being in its early stage, identifying themselves as “absolute beginners”.
- **Second-year students** referred to their identity as a “shadow of a professional,” emphasizing a lack of hands-on experience and reliance on observation during learning.
- **Third-year students** rated themselves as “mediocre,” reflecting their initial exposure to clinical placements.
- **Fourth-year students** recognized their need for continued growth and skill development but expressed confidence in their emerging capabilities.

Conclusions

The formation of professional identity among OT students is strongly influenced by the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Students in earlier years exhibit lower PI self-assessments, reflecting limited exposure to professional contexts.

Variations in self-perception of PI across academic years align with differences in knowledge, practical experience, and understanding of occupational therapy’s scope and structure. These factors appear critical in shaping the development of professional identity throughout the study process.

Stress Level Evaluation among Family Doctors in Latvia in 2024

Poster

Dr. Valdis Dakuls¹

1. Rīga Stradiņš University; Rēzekne Hospital

Objectives*

Family doctors in Latvia often work long hours, but there is little research on their stress levels in their work. Aim of this study is to evaluate stress levels of family doctors in Latvia between different groups (age, sex, burnout self report, etc).

Materials and Methods

Surveys were sent via email to family doctors in Latvia. The survey consisted of a personal data part, created by the author, and a stress evaluation part. For stress evaluation, Perceived Stress Scale (1983) was used, that evaluates stress level from 10 (lowest) to 50 (highest) points and divides stress levels in low (10-23 points), average (24-36 points) and high (37-50) levels.

Results

Data from 209 family doctors was obtained - 21 (10%) men, 188 (90%) women. Mean age of a man was 49.33 years, while the mean age of a woman was 51.98. In total 107 (51.2%) respondents were above the age of 55. There was no significant difference in stress levels amongst different age groups.

Male doctors mean score 29.48 points on the stress scale, but female doctors showed a mean score of 30.34 points, but it was not statistically different between male and female.

Often sensation of burnout syndrome mentioned 95 doctors and showed a mean score of 34.64 points on the stress scale, occasional sensation - 103 doctors with a mean score of 27.55 points, but no sensation of burnout mentioned 11 doctors and scored 17.64 points on the stress scale.

Total number of doctors experiencing high stress levels was 45, average stress level showed 125 doctors, but low level reported 39 doctors.

Conclusions

There are no statistically significant stress levels between male and female family doctors, nor between different age groups. Increased burnout sensations result in higher stress results per survey.

Team Reflection Programme of the Project “Mentality”

Poster

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1. Welfare Department, Riga City Council

Objectives*

The Welfare Department of the Riga City Municipality implemented the European Commission’s “EU - Health for All 2021 - 2027” program project “Mentality: Implementing Mental Health Quality Practices” Mentality project has created a framework for transferring promising mental health practices targeted at children, healthcare and other care workers, migrants, and service providers from owner countries to piloting countries. The goal of the project is to increase awareness, promote knowledge exchange, and create opportunities in the field of psycho-emotional health across Europe. From September 2023 to June 2024, Riga in collaboration with Mental Health Europe

implemented the “Team reflection” program of the project “Mentality”. “Team Reflection” was implemented, adopting good practices from the Netherlands. The program was designed to promote the psycho-emotional health of care professionals under increases workload and stress. Team Reflection provided tools and strategies for healthcare professionals to manage stress effectively, fostering a supportive environment through the buddy system-is a resource used by employees to manage stress on an individual and collective level by helping each other in a healthy way.

Materials and Methods

Capacity-building activities and training materials have been developed to support this process: Booklet - work-book for participants, instructor’s manual for specialists.

Results

The survey (50 participants from 4 institutions) of the participants was conducted in June 2024, benefits are:

- Better understanding of each individual’s role in solving stressful situations.
- Brought the team and colleagues closer together.
- Self-perception of increased awareness and knowledge of stress symptoms and stress awareness and knowledge of stress symptoms and stress management methods.

Conclusions

The program successfully engaged social care workers, with positive feedback on the supervisory effect and stress management techniques learned.

Considering the specifics of organizations and the impact of stress on employees’ well-being and, therefore, on work abilities stress prevention and reduction interventions are an absolute necessity in the organization’s work routine.

Violence and Harassment against Health Workers: Psychological-Clinical Perspective on a Survey in a Policlinic-Hospital

Poster

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1. Occupational Medicine, Department of Clinical and Experimental Medicine, University of Catania, 2. "Cannizzaro" Emergency Hospital Company of Catania, 3. Occupational Medicine, Kore University of Enna

Objectives*

The aim of the study is to investigate cases of violence among healthcare personnel working in one of the main Healthcare Policlinic-Hospital in the South Italy, to estimate the prevalence of this phenomenon, hypothesize the psychological-clinical impact on their lives and plan possible prevention and intervention strategies.

Materials and Methods

Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire, with the aim of identifying factors associated with violence and its psychological impact on healthcare workers (HCWs). The sample included 993 HCWs who, as part of their compulsory health surveillance, had access to the anonymous questionnaire Workplace Violence in the Health Sector (WVHS) (1), in order to identify episodes of physical and psychological violence, bullying and sexual and racial harassment (2).

Results

26% (n=255) of the sample subjects stated that they had experienced one or more forms of workplace violence in the previous 12 months and the most frequent form of violence was verbal violence. Most of the victims were women in the youngest age group, 20-29 years. The most affected class of health workers was nurses and most of them worked at night. Furthermore, most of the victims stated that they did not report the violence and did not do so because they considered it unnecessary.

Conclusions

The aim of the study was to investigate cases of violence in HCWs working in one of the biggest Policlinic-Hospital of the South Italy and it was achieved albeit with the limitations considered above. Moreover, the research hypothesis was largely confirmed. The results of this study almost entirely mirror the data present in the literature(1). The psychological consequences of having been the victim of an episode of violence in the workplace were then hypothesized, among which it is possible to mention: Burnout Syndrome, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression, Anxiety, Sleep Disorders, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Alcohol and Substance Use Disorder, Sexual Dysfunctions (2,3).

Digital Health

Innovative Digital Solution: Promotion of Daily Physical Activity for Paediatric Oncology Patients Using Augmented Reality (AR)

Poster

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Objectives*

This study aims to develop and implement augmented reality (AR)-based tools for monitoring and promoting physical activity in pediatric oncology patients, addressing their unique needs and enhancing engagement through gamification.

Materials and Methods

This presentation will demonstrate the methodology for developing an AR-based intervention aimed at monitoring and promoting physical activity (PA) in pediatric oncology patients. The technical solution incorporates gamified elements and interactive features to enhance patient engagement while capturing precise data on PA metrics, including activity frequency, intensity, and duration. Input from focus groups with patients, families, and healthcare professionals informs the design, ensuring alignment with the developmental, physical, and psychosocial needs of the target population. Pilot studies are being conducted to evaluate the tool's usability, engagement, and impact on PA adherence. Quantitative and qualitative methods, combined with statistical analyses, assess the effectiveness and adaptability of this innovative approach.

Results

Preliminary findings show limited use of AR in monitoring PA for pediatric oncology patients, with existing tools like wearables and gamification lacking engagement for young users. This study introduces an AR-based solution combining interactive elements and precise tracking, tailored to patient needs. Pilot testing demonstrates its potential to boost motivation, adherence, and engagement, with significant improvements in PA metrics and usability.

Conclusions

This research highlights the potential of AR-integrated solutions to address critical gaps in pediatric oncology rehabilitation. The tools developed not only improve engagement but also provide a scalable approach for personalized PA monitoring and support. Future efforts will focus on broader clinical implementation, long-term efficacy evaluation, and optimizing the integration of digital solutions into healthcare systems to support sustainable rehabilitation strategies for pediatric oncology patients.

The project “RSU internal and RSU with LSPA external consolidation grant” is financed by the investment of the European Union’s Recovery and Resilience Mechanism and the state budget 5.2.1.1.i.0/2/24/I/CFLA/005

Proposal for a Digital Game to Assist in Speech Rehabilitation Process

Poster

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1. Centro Universitário Sagrado Coração, 2. Unesp - São Paulo State University, 3. USP - University of São Paulo

Objectives*

Develop a digital game to assist in the speech rehabilitation process.

Materials and Methods

The research was essentially carried out in two stages.

The first stage involved a systematic literature review aimed at identifying the main digital games used in speech rehabilitation, as well as the primary methodologies employed and the results obtained. The literature review was conducted using the Scopus, Web of Science, and PubMed databases, in addition to manual searches in journals specialized in speech-language pathology. Following the review, the key features of digital games used in speech rehabilitation were identified, along with their limitations. Based on this information, a digital game was developed to assist in the speech rehabilitation process. The game was created using the Unity platform and was adapted to meet the specific needs of patients with speech disorders.

Results

A digital game featuring pairs of occlusive and fricative words, totaling fifteen pairs, was developed. The game operates with a round-based mechanic and increases in difficulty as gameplay progresses. It functions similarly to Tetris, where a word “falls” on the screen, and the player must correctly pronounce the word before it reaches the bottom. An artificial intelligence system, integrated via API, is used to validate the player’s speech.

Conclusions

The developed game demonstrates a creative approach to speech rehabilitation, combining engaging mechanics with AI-driven validation. By integrating entertainment and therapeutic goals, it offers a promising tool to enhance speech therapy outcomes, providing patients with an interactive, adaptive, and motivating experience to improve their pronunciation and communication skills effectively.

Ergonomics at Work and in Everyday Life

Risk Factors of Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders amongst Estonian Medical Laboratory Workers

Oral

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Objectives*

The aim of this study is to estimate the prevalence of work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMSDs) amongst Estonian medical laboratory workers (MLWs) in relation to individual and job-related factors.

Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional survey was carried out among 502 MLWs from three regional and four central hospitals in Estonia. The criteria for selecting of the study group were: occupational experience in the current job ≥ 1 year and workload at least 0.5 staff. The e-questionnaire focused on the demographic and job-related factors and pain at six body regions in the past 12 month (12M) and in the past month (PM). The group differences were calculated using χ^2 -test, t-test or Mann-Whitney tests, logistic regression analyses was used to identify independent risk factors for the MSDs.

Results

Altogether, 122 MLWs (response rate 25.1%) were enrolled. The prevalence of WRMSDs was 82% and 61.5% in the past 12M and PM, respectively, and multi-site pain (≥ 2 body parts) appeared accordingly in 64.8% and 27.9%. Pain appeared mainly in the neck and low back in the past 12M and elbow, wrist/hand and knees in the PM. Result of the logistic regression analysis showed higher odds of getting low back pain among laboratory technicians (2.20; 1.05-4.60), higher odds of getting shoulder pain among participants with secondary vs high education (6.69; 2.32-19.30). Employees with intermittent vs sedentary working posture have more than three times higher chance to get low back pain (3.55; 1.38-9.15). Cohabiting and married vs single workers had four (3.99; 1.45-10.94) and six (5.68; 2.23-14.49) times higher chances to suffer from neck pain, respectively.

Conclusions

The prevalence of WRMSDs among Estonian MLWs is high. Most of risk factor were individual factors and some job-related as profession and work experience, we can't to influence to prevent WRMSDs. We can increase awareness of WRMSD prevention through improved workplace ergonomics and health behavior.

Daily Physical Activity and Aerobic Endurance of Office Workers

Poster

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Objectives*

Health issues can influence job performance and further impact productivity when employees are unable to present their performance. Lower aerobic capacity is associated with reduced ability to sustain intensive tasks, as it limits endurance and efficiency.

The aim of the study is to assess the physical activity and aerobic endurance of office workers.

Materials and Methods

51 office workers participated in the study (89% women and 11% men, with a mean age of 42.2±10.1 years). Data were collected using the short version of the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) and the 6-Minute Walk Test (6-MWT). The questionnaire process and the collection of data from the 6-MWT of respondents took place anonymously, with the permission of the Research Ethics Committee of Rīga Stradiņš University. Mathematical statistics (descriptive statistics and correlation) were used. This research was funded by the framework of the Plan of the European Union Recovery and Resilience Facility and the State budget grant RSU/LSPA-PA-2024/1-0013.

Results

The results have shown that 41% of office workers do not participate in vigorous physical activities, while 19% participate in them two days a week. On the other hand, 19% of office workers do not participate in moderate physical activities during the week. The results of the 6-MWT study indicate that 88% are healthy people, the average test result ranges from 400 to 700 meters. 59% of them spend 480 minutes or more sitting per day. There is a correlation between the time spent participating in moderate physical activities and the distance covered in the 6-MWT test, and the longer the employees sit, the less distance covered in the 6-MWT.

Conclusions

Explored connection between daily moderate physical activity, sitting time, and aerobic endurance, it is important for office workers to decrease their sedentary behavior. In the future, complex solutions would be necessary to promote physical activity in the workplace.

Decoding Resting Muscle Activity: Preliminary Insights into Upper Limb Neuromuscular Health

Poster

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Objectives*

Resting-state electromyography (EMG) is underexplored compared to maximal muscle activity but provides valuable insights into baseline neuromuscular health. Minimal EMG activity reveals patterns of muscle fatigue, recovery, and dysfunction, aiding in the detection of work-related upper limb disorders (WRULDs).

Materials and Methods

Resting-state and maximal effort EMG data, including voltage and spectral mean, were collected from 23 healthy participants across six upper limb muscle groups: deltoids, biceps, triceps, brachioradialis, wrist flexors, and extensors. Data analysis focused on asymmetry, variability, and inter-muscle correlations using IBM SPSS Statistics 28.

Results

The lowest resting-state spectral mean was in the right deltoids (128.18 ± 35.32 Hz), while the highest was in the right biceps (188.72 ± 30.20 Hz). The highest maximal spectral mean occurred in the right extensors (157.93 ± 21.85 Hz). The biceps exhibited the greatest right-side dominance (ratio: 1.214, 21.41% stronger), followed by the triceps (1.159, 15.91% stronger) and brachioradialis (1.125, 12.48% stronger). Conversely, the wrist flexors showed left-side dominance, with the right side 18.62% weaker (ratio: 0.814). The deltoids were nearly symmetrical (0.991, 0.90% weaker on the right). Stable activation patterns were observed in the deltoids (CV: 0.51), while the brachioradialis displayed moderate variability (SD: 0.98). Significant correlations included the right deltoid with the right biceps ($r = 0.54$, $p = 0.0078$) and the right brachioradialis with wrist flexors ($r = 0.71$, $p = 0.0001$).

Conclusions

The biceps and brachioradialis emerged as key muscles for further study due to their high activation, asymmetry, and inter-muscle correlations. Resting-state EMG shows potential in diagnosing neuromuscular imbalances and guiding interventions for WRULDs. Findings suggest that repetitive occupational tasks may exacerbate imbalances, highlighting the need for ergonomic designs and targeted rehabilitation protocols.

Defining Role and Impact on Human Factor in Occupational Safety

Poster

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1. University of Latvia

Objectives*

Review existing sources in order to explore and define human factors within occupational safety and evaluate their impact on workplace accidents and occupational safety.

Materials and Methods

A literature review was conducted to define human factors in workplace safety. Sources were identified through Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar using keywords such as “human factors,” “workplace safety,” and “accident prevention.” Inclusion criteria focused on peer-reviewed articles, books, and reports published between 2000 and 2023, specifically related to safety-critical industries such as manufacturing and construction. The review synthesizes definitions of human factors in occupational safety, their impact on workplace accidents, and proposed management strategies.

Results

The reviewed literature defines human factors in workplace safety as the interaction between human behavior, organizational systems, and technology that influences safety outcomes. Key contributors to workplace accidents include unsafe behaviors, inadequate training, and insufficient safety management. Although technological advancements have reduced some risks, they have also introduced challenges in managing human-technology interactions. Strategies proposed in the literature emphasize safety-oriented organizational cultures, enhancing employee training, and adopting systemic approaches to human factors management.

Conclusions

The literature review reveals that while various definitions of human factors exist, they consistently emphasize the interaction between human behavior, organizational systems, and technology in influencing workplace safety. Despite differing interpretations, the literature agrees on significant impact of human factors on accidents, with key contributors including unsafe behaviors, insufficient training, and inadequate safety management. A clear and unified definition is crucial to address these challenges effectively, guiding the development of strategies that enhance workplace safety and prevent accidents

Impact of Physical and Mental Workload on Office Workers’ Well-being: Systematic Literature Review

Poster

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Objectives*

Well-being in the workplace is a multidimensional concept that encompasses aspects of physical and mental health, emotional stability and job satisfaction (Roja & Kalkis, 2020; Danna & Griffin, 1999). Litchfield (2020) highlights that workplaces that implement well-being programmes not only improve employees’ emotional and physical health, but also improve productivity.

Hence the aim of the research is to perform systematic literature review on physical and mental workload risk factors that can influence office worker’s well being at work.

Materials and Methods

A systematic literature review was conducted using databases: PubMed and Scopus. The search included articles published between 1995 and 2024. Keywords used in the search were “physical workload,” “mental workload,” “office workers,” “well-being,” “risk factors”. Studies were selected based on their relevance to the research aim, and data were extracted and analyzed to identify common risk factors and their impacts on well-being.

Results

The review identified several key risk factors for physical and mental workload that affect office workers’ well-being. Physical workload factors included prolonged sitting, poor ergonomic setups, and repetitive tasks, which were linked to musculoskeletal disorders and fatigue. Mental workload factors included high job demands, low job control, and lack of social support, which were associated with stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction. The implementation of well-being programs and ergonomic interventions showed significant improvements in both physical and mental health outcomes, as example, Khalid & Syed (2024) focus on a multi-level approach that includes individual, organisational and societal level factors.

Conclusions

Both physical and mental workload significantly impact the well-being of office workers. Addressing these risk factors through comprehensive well-being programs and ergonomic interventions can enhance employee health, job satisfaction, and overall productivity.

Acknowledgment

Research was supported by the project “Impact of ergonomics and psychosocial risks on work performance for office workers in banking sector”, Agreement No. LU-BA-ZG-2024/1-0018, UL registration No. ESS2024/465-ZG-9.

Office Equipment Concerning Sedentariness of Employees Assessed by Self-Reported Levels of Physical Activity

Poster

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Objectives*

Prolonged sitting in office settings is known to provoke unfavourable health outcomes. This study aimed to assess the role of office equipment in the self-reported physical activity level of office employees.

Materials and Methods

53 Latvian office employees were anonymously asked about their working conditions and subjective physical activity level using the 10-point Likert scale through electronically distributed questionnaires. This study was a part of the project "Multidisciplinary approach for the development of sustainable habit of regular physical activity among sedentary workers" (RSU/LSPA-PA-2024/1-0013) which was funded by the framework of the Plan of the European Union Recovery and Resilience Facility and the State budget (Nr.5.2.1.1.i.0/2/24/I/CFLA/005).

Results

90.6% of respondents noted that their dominant position while working was prolonged sitting, 52.8% usually worked for 31-40 hours, but 39.7% - even more than 41 hours. Surprisingly, employees with stationary computers in offices and working remotely subjectively were slightly more physically active (mean 5.44 ± 1.62 and 6.00 ± 1.16 points respectively out of a 10-point Likert scale) than those working on laptops (5.33 ± 1.71 , $p > 0.05$). Those whose onsite workplace was equipped with height adjustable desks reported lower activity levels (5.10 ± 1.87) than those who sat at regular tables (5.44 ± 1.46 , $p > 0.05$), but while working remotely – 6.00 ± 1.87 with height adjustable tables vs. 5.23 ± 1.55 without. 25.0% of office employees whose workplace was equipped with height adjustable tables used it solely for sitting, but 58.3% used it for standing for less than a quarter of the working day.

Conclusions

Preliminary results show that subjective physical activity assessment does not correlate much with workplace equipment. Probably, employees working on stationary computers feel discomfort that stimulates them to be more physically active. Various factors could contribute to the subjective feelings making self-reported assessment an imprecise instrument. Objective measurements are necessary for precise estimation of occupational interventions for the reduction of sedentariness.

Physical and Mental Strain on Operating Theatre Staff: Systematic Literature Review

Poster

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Objectives*

Healthcare workers, particularly operating theatre staff, are subjected to forced postures, repetitive and monotonous movements, physical overload, and fatigue of specific muscle groups (Yang et al., 2020; Asghari et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2023). Additionally, operating theatre staff face significant mental strain due to time constraints, long working hours, rapidly changing technologies, and the need for quick decision-making (Dias et al., 2019). This study aims to analyze the scientific literature on the physical and mental strain experienced by operating theatre staff in hospitals.

Materials and Methods

A systematic literature analysis was conducted using multiple databases, including PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science, using keywords such as "operating theatre staff," "physical strain," "mental strain," and "ergonomics". Studies published in the last ten years were included, focusing on peer-reviewed articles that examined health-care workers in operating rooms.

Results

The literature review included 15 studies from various countries, predominantly cross-sectional in design and it revealed that physical strain factors for operating theatre staff identified were (So et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2017): forced postures, repetitive movements, and muscle fatigue, with prevalence rates ranging from 30% to 70%. Mental strain factors (Galletta et al., 2016) include mainly time pressure, long working hours, and decision-making stress, with prevalence rates between 40% and 80%. The review highlights significant physical and mental strain factors that influence operating theatre staff, emphasizing the need for ergonomic interventions and mental health support programs

Conclusions

Physical and mental strain risk factors are significant among operating theatre staff, especially highlighting the interaction between these factors that can intensify work related muscular skeletal disorders and mental disorders that could influence wellbeing and performance of operating theatre staff.

Acknowledgment

This research has been supported by the project "Work Related Musculoskeletal Disorders and Psychosocial Risks for Operating Room Health Care Staff", Agreement No. LU-BA-PA-2024/1-0044, UL registration No. ESS2024/465.

Physical Injuries Experienced by Nurses and Their Relationship with Ergonomic Factors of the Work Environment

Poster

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Objectives*

1. To determine what physical injuries nurses usually experience. 2. Determine the ergonomic factors of the work environment. 3. To determine the correlations between physical injuries experienced by nurses and ergonomic work environment factors.

Materials and Methods

A quantitative study was conducted at tertiary level hospital using a questionnaire survey method with surgical nurses (n=60). The Chi-square (χ^2) criterion and z test were used.

Results

70% of nurses most commonly experience muscle strain injuries and most often complain of pain in the lower back (70%), shoulder girdle (51,7%), and neck (46,7%). 46,7% of nurses spend most of the working day in a standing position, and 63,3% spend more than 4 hours standing per day. 83,3% of nurses lift heavier than recommended weights during work. 70% of nurses forcefully bend their neck or back during work. Changing the position of patients and transporting patients (in bed) are causing the most uncomfortable body posture. Activities that require repetitive movements: removing medicines from the package (86,7%) and preparing/injecting medicines (90%). Most nurses experienced physical injury while lifting heavy weights in an uncomfortable position (63,3%) and changing the position of patients (63,3%). Muscle strains were statistically significantly associated with changing the patient's position, lifting heavy weights, bending motion, twisting motion, long standing, standing bent at an angle of over 30 degrees, actions performed with raised arms, and sudden movements. The perceptible swelling of the neck was associated with prolonged bending over and performing repetitive movements.

Conclusions

1. Most nurses most commonly experience muscle strain injuries, pain in the lower back, shoulder girdle and neck.
2. Most nurses lift heavier than recommended weights during work. About half of nurses spend most of the working day in a standing position.
3. Most nurses experienced physical injury while lifting heavy weights in an uncomfortable position and changing the position of patients.

Prevalence and Severity of Vocal Cord Fatigue and Sleep Quality among Teachers

Poster

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1. RSU Latvian Academy of Sport Education

Objectives*

Teachers are among the most vulnerable professionals to vocal cord fatigue due to the vocal demands of their occupation. Prolonged periods of speaking loudly, often in challenging environments, place significant strain on the vocal cords. This research aims to determine whether teachers experience vocal cord fatigue and sleep quality.

Materials and Methods

The study group consists of 79 teachers from different education levels, such as interest education, secondary school, and higher education, who participated in the questionnaire. Ethics committee approval was obtained, and participants participated in the study voluntarily.

The research methods are the Standardized Voice Risk Factor Questionnaire, Vocal Symptoms Scale, Voice Handicap Index (VHI), Perceived Stress Scale, and Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI), which were adopted for use in the Latvian cultural environment and distributed to gather relevant data.

Results

The preliminary results have shown that 38% of teachers believe that they have no severe voice problems, 46% think that they have mild voice problems, and 16% believe that they have moderate voice problems.

Conclusions

Findings from this study will guide the creation of specialized movement activities incorporating breathing exercises, enabling teachers to reduce vocal cord strain and support vocal health. This research represents an important step toward improving teachers' well-being and sleep quality by addressing a prevalent but frequently overlooked occupational health concern.

Work Related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WRMSDs) Among Office Workers in the Banking Sector in Latvia

Poster

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Objectives*

Work related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMSDs) are prevalent among workers in banking sector not only in Latvia, but also worldwide who are engaged in static tasks, such as prolonged sitting, standing, repetitive movements, extended computer use (Pei Pei Heng et al., 2020). Computer-related tasks often lead to significant musculoskeletal pain or discomfort, particularly affecting the neck, upper extremities, and lumbar spine (Roja and Kalkis, 2022; Ghanbary & Habibi, 2015).

Aim of the research is to investigate WRMSDs main causes among office workers in the banking sector in Latvia, based on questionnaire.

Materials and Methods

The questionnaire was used in research which was developed based on extended version of Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire (Kuorinka et al., 1987; Roja et al., 2013). Data was analyzed using SPSS 20.0 employing descriptive analysis.

Altogether 50 banking sector employees participated in the research, of which 30 were females, but 20 males, mainly aged 22-45 years.

Results

Questionnaire results revealed that main discomfort for employees were in various body parts: upper back (90%), shoulder (86%), lower back (82%), neck (78%), wrists (68%). Majority of respondents reported experiencing at least one WRMSD symptom, indicating that this discomfort negatively affected their work efficiency. The main causes of WRMSDs are prolonged sitting time, visual strain and monotonous hand and wrist movements. Employees reported high level of psychological strain, that can significantly also impact physical strain.

Conclusions

The main causes for employees in banking sector are prolonged sitting, visual strain, and repetitive hand and wrist movements associated with digital device usage. Future research will be focused on investigation of WRMSDs in connection with mental strain and work efficiency aspects.

Acknowledgment

This research has been supported by the project “Impact of ergonomics and psychosocial risks on work performance for office workers in banking sector”, Agreement No. LU-BA-ZG-2024/1-0018, UL registration No. ESS2024/465-ZG-9.

Governance and Financing of Health Systems

Analysis of Changes in Hospitalisation Rates for Patients with Acute Myocardial Infarction during COVID-19 Outbreak

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University, 2. Centre for Disease Prevention and Control of Latvia

Objectives*

To estimate changes in the rate of hospitalization and 30-day mortality rate of patients with acute myocardial infarction during COVID -19 outbreak.

Materials and Methods

Administrative data for 28846 hospitalizations with diagnose acute myocardial infarction (hospital discharge diagnose) in 2014 – 2021, data on 30-day mortality, data on patient’s individual demographic characteristics (age, sex, co-morbidities (quantified by Charlson index), treatment costs, were used to estimate changes in hospitalization rate and changes in 30-days mortality rate.

Results

Total number of hospitalizations with AMI diagnose has decreased over the period of analysis from 3751 in 2014 till 2885 in 2021. The decrease in number of hospitalizations with AMI diagnose started to decrease in 2018 (-5,2% from previous year), decrease became sharper in 2020 (-7,5%) and in 2021 (-13,1%). For the same periods, 30-days mortality remained between 14,2, and 15,1% with increase till 16,4% in 2021. The average cost of treatment was constantly increasing from 2260,46 ((95% CI: 2194,82-2326,10) in 2014 till 3167,01 ((95% CI: 3071,85-3260,24) in 2021. The highest increase rate (14%) was observed in 2021, followed by increase by 8% in 2020. No associations between cost of treatment, age of the patients and their comorbidity level were observed.

Conclusions

Similarly to other countries, in Latvia substantial decrease in the total number of hospitalisations with acute myocardial infarction diagnose was observed during COVID -19 pandemic. Average cost per one hospitalization increased in 2020 and 2021. At the same time patient’s outcome had worsened – 30-day mortality after hospitalization with acute myocardial infarction diagnose increased. Shift of medical resources to treatment of patients infected with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus has limited their availability for treatment of patients with other health conditions. It is associated with increase in average cost of treatment of one patient as well as with worsening of health outcomes.

Analysis of Costs of Treatment of Patients Diagnosed with Tick-Borne Viral Encephalitis

Poster

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Objectives*

To estimate direct medical costs of treatment of patients diagnosed with TBE.

Materials and Methods

Analysis of NHS administrative data for 1586 patients hospitalized with TBE and data for 4849 treated in outpatient setting from 2018 – 2022.

Results

Average number of patients treated in hospital setting per year was 317 (95% CI: 266-367). Average number of patients treated in outpatient care per year was 970 (95% CI: 704-1235). No trend in the changes in number of patients was observed. Average cost per patient paid by the NHS of hospital setting increased from 715,17 EUR (95% CI: 652,24- 778,10) in 2018 to 1 191,53 EUR (95% CI: 1 045,19 - 1 337,87) in 2022. Average cost per patient paid by the HNS in outpatient care was 14,60 EUR (95% CI: 13,32 - 15,88). In total, the NHS has paid 1,3 mln EUR for provision of outpatient and inpatient care of patients infected with TBE during 2018-2022 period. No association between average treatment costs, age and sex of the patients was observed.

Conclusions

Tick-borne encephalitis is creating an increasing burden to the healthcare system, driven by ever increasing amount of resources and costs required for the treatment of TBE-infected patients within scarce budgets. Estimation of cost-effectiveness of the vaccination in general population or specific patient subgroups using local data is needed to provide evidence-based recommendations for changes in the basket of the state paid healthcare services.

Assessment of Accessibility of Cross Border Health Care Services for the Valka Region Inhabitants

Poster

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Objectives*

To disclose barriers in accessibility of cross border health care services for the Valka region (Latvia) inhabitants in association with demographic and other factors that affect residents' willingness to receive cross border health care services, incl. costs, necessity to travel and others.

Materials and Methods

A survey of residents of the Valka region to find out their opinion about obstacles for receiving health care services at the Valga hospital (Estonia) (N=212), two focus group discussions with residents and general practitioners working at the Valka region, and in-depth interviews with management of the Valga and Vidzeme hospitals.

Results

Majority of survey respondents (88,7%) would like to receive health care services at the Valga hospital on regular basis, mainly due to closer reach (91.0%) and smaller waiting time (61%). Although the cost of health care services in Estonia is higher, the cost of transportation to the Vidzeme hospital is a burden (82.1%). Identified barriers for receiving health care services at the Valga hospital for the Valka inhabitants include language barrier, the need to translate the medical records received in the Valga, insufficient information about the services provided at the Valga hospital, existing administrative procedure to receive reimbursement of expenses from the NHS, Latvia, difficulties in the continuity of care in Latvia and others.

Conclusions

Although there is accessibility of cross-border services for the Valka region inhabitants, several significant barriers need to be removed: better care coordination, developing sustainable care pathways, extend the range of state payed services, exploiting possible IT solutions for data exchange and language barrier.

Comparison of Healthcare Service Utilisation in the Remote Border Region of Valka Municipality and the Country as a whole

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

To compare utilization of health care services' structure and amount in the Valka region and Latvia as a whole in association with population age, mortality and morbidity rates.

Materials and Methods

Data analysis of healthcare services utilized by the Valka region inhabitants and Latvia in average (2018-2022) obtained from the National Health Service and the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control of Latvia. Analysis of differences in the amount and structure of health care services for certain chronic diseases was carried out.

Results

In the Valka region the proportion of inhabitants at age over 55 years is higher than in Latvia (26% vs 21%), but the proportion of working age population is lower (59% vs 63%). Premature mortality (2022) before age 65 in the Valka region quite significantly exceeds the relevant indicator in the country: 657 cases compared to 449 per 100 000 inhabitants. Utilization of state paid outpatient health care services in Valka region compared to Latvia is similar or even higher for selected chronic diseases, but the proportion of consultations provided by general practitioners is higher, but specialists' consultations and diagnostic services - lower.

Conclusions

Overall accessibility of health care services, especially early diagnosis and initiation of treatment, in the remote border area of Valka region is lower than in average in Latvia. This could be associated with the increase in premature mortality.

Development of an Economic Model to Determine Benefits and Costs of Tick-Borne Encephalitis Vaccination in Latvia

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University, 2. Children’s Clinical University Hospital; Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

Tick-borne encephalitis (TBE) is a serious acute infectious disease of the central nervous system that can result in long-term neurological sequelae or death. The course of the disease can be unpredictable, disabling and potentially life-threatening in any age group. Considering the high level of disease prevalence, the activity of ticks and the frequency of their infection with TBE virus, Latvia belongs to an endemic area. Decision-analytic modelling is a valid approach to assess the benefits and consequences of TBE vaccination in Latvia.

Materials and Methods

To develop an economic model for TBE vaccination, a TBE patient pathway model was initially created based on the literature review, description of clinical course of TBE virus (Zavadska et al. 2023; Dobler et al., 2020) and expert interviews. In the following stage, NHS cost data on the structure of services was analyzed and used to complete the model.

Results

The economic model comparing outcomes and costs in two patient cohorts – vaccinated and unvaccinated – was developed. We used a 2-step economic modelling approach: a Decision Tree to model patient treatment in the symptomatic disease phase, and a 5-state Markov model structure for treating patients with long-term neurological sequelae. The model incorporates ambulatory, and hospital healthcare setting and assesses clinical consequences typical to the TBE disease: recovery, discharge with permanent neurological sequelae and death. The model estimates costs from the perspective of NHS and includes other direct medical costs.

Conclusions

The developed economic model is an unprecedented approach in Latvia for assessing health technologies. Based on local observational data we will use this model to estimate treatment costs and outcomes for both patient cohorts, and to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of a nationwide vaccination program against TBE infection in Latvia.

Family Medicine as a Career Choice: Scoping Review of Interventions Used in Latvia and beyond in Affecting Medical Students' Choice of Residency

Poster

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Objectives*

The goal of the review is to compare various interventions aimed at increasing medical students' selection of family medicine as their residency specialty in Latvia and other countries.

Materials and Methods

Articles, published in U.S. National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine database, have been chosen as materials for the review.

A scoping review has been made from the literature analyzed.

Results

There were no studies related to interventions and their outcomes used in Latvia, therefore it is an open field of research.

There are various kinds of interventions used in different countries. Mandatory rotations in primary care practices, mentorships, special educational pathways and establishment of interest groups or specialized courses were with positive effect on choosing the family medicine specialty and are used the most.

Specialized educational pathways and curricula, similar to pediatric tracks implemented by Riga Stradiņš University, financial incentives, promotion of research opportunities, regional campuses and student run free clinics enhance the effect of other interventions and are best used in combination.

Conclusions

Family medicine (FM) faces a global challenge in attracting medical students, despite its vital role in healthcare. This study examines interventions used in Latvia and compares them to international strategies for encouraging family medicine as a career choice.

Many countries are implementing and researching the most effective interventions to affect students' choice of family medicine as a career option. Creating and implementing the various kinds of interventions require planning, research, and significant resources.

Meanwhile, a multifaceted, culturally adapted approach, encompassing interventions based on studies from other countries, is necessary to position family medicine as a competitive and desirable career choice for medical students in Latvia.

Funder: VPP-VM-Sabiedrības_Veselība-2024/1-0002

Grant: Enhancing General Practitioner Resilience in Latvia: Challenges and Solutions

Interventions to Attract and Retain Family Medicine Physicians in Specialty and in Rural Areas: Practices in Countries Around the World

Poster

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Objectives*

The aim of the scoping review is to identify successful mechanisms for attracting and retaining family doctors in the specialty, including in remote rural regions

Materials and Methods

Articles published in scientific peer-reviewed journals in the period from 2017 to 2024 on relevant research and systematic reviews from various European, Asian and American countries were reviewed.

Results

In Latvia, the main incentives for attracting family doctors are financial. However, the experience of other countries shows that for the successful attraction and retention of family doctors in the specialty and rural regions, are more effective when combined with other initiatives.

For example, mentoring and continuous support are important for long-term retention and empowerment and are often combined with interventions that engage the family doctor community.

Engagement, integration into communities - are considered very effective interventions that help retain doctors and improve satisfaction.

Increasing autonomy and authority provides the opportunity to work independently, create new work structures and adapt to their needs.

Initiatives aimed at modernizing structures, technologies and solving financial problems are effective, although they are time-consuming and require policy adjustment.

Social networks, 'advertising', technologies and multimedia solutions are effective at attracting doctors as well as promoting networking and reducing isolation.

Conclusions

Although many of the aforementioned factors that influence young doctors' choices to pursue a career in family medicine in other countries may be applicable to Latvia, in order to accurately understand the situation in Latvia, research is needed on the influence of factors on the choice of family medicine specifically in Latvia.

Funder: VPP-VM-Sabiedrības_Veselība-2024/1-0002

Grant: Enhancing General Practitioner Resilience in Latvia: Challenges and Solutions

Public, Corporate, and Collective Governance Aspects of Health Care in Latvia

Poster

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Objectives*

This study aims to evaluate the interplay between public, corporate, and collective governance in Latvia's health care sector. It focuses on the role of public, corporate, and societal governance in shaping policy, influencing the quality and accessibility of services, and fostering innovation. Additionally, the study explores how collective governance practices, driven by community involvement and stakeholder engagement, contribute to improving transparency, accountability, and responsiveness within the health care system. By examining these governance dimensions, the research seeks to identify opportunities for enhancing collaboration and addressing existing gaps to ensure more sustainable and equitable health care development in Latvia.

Materials and Methods

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating policy analysis, structured expert interviews, and a review of national health care and financial data. Comparative analysis of governance models from other countries provides context and benchmarking, highlighting best practices, systemic strengths, and areas for improvement to inform governance and policy development in Latvia's health care system.

Results

Public governance drives broad policy initiatives and funding distribution, while corporate governance enhances efficiency and innovation. Although limited in scope, collective community involvement strengthens trust, accountability, and responsiveness when implemented. Disparities among the three governance approaches highlight uneven frameworks, suggesting that integrated models yield more consistent and equitable outcomes. Case studies from various health care institutions emphasize the importance of collaborative governance in fostering long-term, sustainable improvements across the sector.

Conclusions

Latvia's health care system is driven by public governance approach, but is transiting towards balanced public oversight, corporate efficiency, and collective engagement. Strengthening collective governance mechanisms and fostering closer cooperation between public, corporate and societal sectors can enhance efficiency, service quality and legitimacy. The study calls for policy reforms promoting transparency, inclusivity, and participatory governance to ensure sustainable health care development.

Scoping Review of Factors Influencing Medical Students' Residency Choices with Emphasis on Family Medicine, in Latvia and Other Countries

Poster

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Objectives*

Goal of scoping review is to compare and compile varied factors affecting medical student's choice of residency in Latvia and other countries with an emphasis on choice of family medicine.

Materials and Methods

Articles, published in U.S. National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine database, have been chosen as materials for the review.

A scoping review has been made from the literature analyzed.

Results

Studies looking at varied factors affecting medical student choices in Latvia have not yet been made, yet assumptions could be made seeing how similar the factors are between countries.

Factors attracting students to family medicine include the opportunity to build long-term relationships with patients, work-life balance and the diversity of medical problems encountered. Positive mentoring experiences shape favorable perceptions of family medicine, while the ability to practice autonomously is another compelling draw.

Conversely, deterrents to family medicine choice include its perceived lower prestige and lack of challenges. Financial concerns, resulting from lower earnings, and the administrative burden associated with solo practices. Many also prioritize specialization or seeing immediate therapeutic outcomes, which family medicine is perceived to lack.

Stereotypes, such as viewing it as a lifestyle-oriented specialty more suited to women, may also influence career decisions.

Conclusions

Residency selection is influenced by diverse factors that reflect both the opportunities and challenges of specific specialties. This analysis examines key factors attracting or deterring medical students from choosing family medicine as a residency choice and a career.

To address these factors, many different interventions are being realized by different countries and institutions. Such as financial incentives, political changes, increasing representation of family medicine and addressing the stereotypes associated with specialty.

This analysis highlights that improving family medicine appeal in Latvia requires a multifactorial approach informed by successful practices from other countries.

Funder: VPP-VM-Sabiedrības_Veselība-2024/1-0002

Grant: Enhancing General Practitioner Resilience in Latvia: Challenges and Solutions

Scoping Review of Factors Influencing the Choice of Young Physicians to Practice Family Medicine, Especially in Rural Regions with Emphasis on Family Medicine, in Latvia and Other Countries

Poster

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Objectives*

The aim of the scoping review is to identify the factors that influence young doctors to choose a career in the field of family medicine, with a particular focus on the choice to build a career in rural regions.

Materials and Methods

Articles published in scientific peer-reviewed journals in the period from 2017 to 2024 on relevant research and systematic reviews from various European, Asian and American countries were reviewed.

Results

According to available data, 30% of family doctors in Latvia are of pre-retirement age and concurrently there is a significant shortage of family doctors in remote rural regions.

Although there are no studies available directly on the factors influencing the choice of new family doctors in Latvia, the experience of other countries shows that the factors that influence young doctors to choose a career in the specialty are:

- The opportunity to be more independent in their work,
- A wide range of patients,
- The opportunity to balance work with family.

Concurrently, choosing a career in a rural region is influenced by such factors as existing ties with the region, the assessment of rural regions as a more family-friendly environment and the opportunity to be independent in their specialty while maintaining a wide range of patients and manipulations.

Whereas, the main factors that discourage the choice of the specialty of family doctor are the administrative burden and legal requirements. Lack of support and recognition, both from the government and society. Uncertain future - regulatory changes, financial fluctuations, insufficient government support, ect.

Conclusions

Although many of the aforementioned factors that influence young doctors' choices to pursue a career in family medicine in other countries may be applicable to Latvia, in order to accurately understand the situation in Latvia, research is needed on the influence of factors on the choice of family medicine specifically in Latvia.

Funder: VPP-VM-Sabiedrības_Veselība-2024/1-0002

Grant: Enhancing General Practitioner Resilience in Latvia: Challenges and Solutions

Health Inequalities and Populations at-Risk

Association between Frailty and Mobility Limitations in the Ageing Population of Latvia

Oral

Prof. Aija Bukova-Žideļuna¹, Prof. Anita Villeruša¹

1. Institute of Public Health, Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences, Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

Frailty is defined by a decline in physiological reserves and increased vulnerability to adverse health outcomes, often associated with activity limitations, mobility challenges, and reduced functional independence, which substantially elevate healthcare needs. This study aimed to investigate the association between frailty and mobility limitations in the ageing population of Latvia.

Materials and Methods

Data from Wave 9 (collected 2022) of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement (SHARE), including respondents aged 50+ in Latvia, were analysed. Frailty was assessed using the SHARE-Frailty Instrument (FI). The Global Activity Limitation Indicator (GALI) characterized activity limitations; activities of daily living (ADL) assessed mobility-related self-care tasks; and instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) evaluated tasks necessary for independent living. Logistic regression identified associated factors and tested for collinearity, with significance set at $p < 0.05$.

Financed by the project RSU internal and RSU with LSPA external consolidation No.5.2.1.1.i.0/2/24/I/CFLA/005, Postdoctoral Grant Associated factors of frailty and fall-related mortality in the older population in Latvia No.RSU-PG-2024/1-0005.

Results

The study sample comprised 1,438 older adults from Latvia (60.4% female) with a mean age of 67.9 years (SD \pm 9.5). According to SHARE-FI, 7.2% were classified as frail. Limitations were reported by 56.0% of respondents based on GALI, 4.9% based on ADL, and 17.7% based on IADL. After adjusting for age, gender, and chronic disease, all three measures of limitations - GALI (OR = 52.1, 95% CI: 7.1–378.8), ADL (OR = 7.6, 95% CI: 4.3–13.5), and IADL (OR = 8.3, 95% CI: 5.1–13.6) - were associated with higher odds of frailty. Multicollinearity was observed between ADL and IADL.

Conclusions

The study identifies a correlation between frailty, activity limitations, mobility challenges, and reduced functional independence, emphasizing the need for preventive strategies focused on early frailty detection and tailored interventions to enhance mobility and maintain independence in the aging population of Latvia.

Exploring the ‘Resilience’ of Socio-Economic and Geographic Inequalities / Barriers to Access in Health Care Among 50+ Population in Greece (2004–2021): Impact of the Economic Crisis and Pandemic

Oral

Dr. Ismini Drakou¹

1. European University Cyprus

Objectives*

The study explores the evolution of inequalities/ barriers to access and use of health care services by the 50+ population in Greece, at specific single points in time: before the economic crisis (2004), at the peak (2015), after the Economic Adjustment Programs’exit (2018), at the peak of the COVID19 pandemic (June 2021).

Materials and Methods

Four (4) cross-sectional analyses were conducted based on four (4) waves of the nationwide European database SHARE for the 50+ population in Greece:

- 2004(Wave 1) with sample of 2,659 individuals,
- 2015(Wave 6) at the peak of the crisis with 4,788 individuals
- 2019(Wave 8), after the economic crisis with 2,496 individuals
- During the COVID-19 pandemic peak in 2021(Wave Corona SHARE Survey 2 - CSC2) with 2,496 individuals.

After identifying key (health status, socio-economic and geographical) determinants of healthcare utilization, separate analyses were made for the probability of positive use and the frequency of health care visits using the logistic regression method - odds ratios (Negative Binomial and Truncated Negative Binomial Models) in terms of: (a) inpatient visit (b) outpatient doctor visit (PHC) and (c) unmet/foregone care.

Results

(a) In terms of utilization: About the effect of the economic crisis – there is a significant decrease in average annual any medical outpatient visits (mainly PHC), -among all the Waves- favoring low-income groups, and less in inpatient visits with a small decrease in average annual inpatient visits. (b) There are consistent significant intra- and inter-regional geographical disparities for any medical outpatient (PHC) visits in favor of thinly populated areas in all four Waves. (c)About the impact of the pandemic, the above inequalities increased in all health care types and led to unmet/foregone care for the 50+.

Conclusions

Socio-economic along with geographical disparities, particularly in PHC, remain “persistent” barriers to health-care access for the 50+ with significant challenges for healthy aging in Greece.

Regional Mortality Inequalities and Causes of Death in the Republic of Moldova, 2014–2023

Oral

*Dr. Olga Penina*¹

1. Nicolae Testemițanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy

Objectives*

To analyze geographical disparities in overall and cause-specific mortality trends in Moldova from 2014 to 2023.

Materials and Methods

The study utilized depersonalized individual death records for Moldova (2014–2023) and official post-censal population estimates. Life tables and standardized death rates (with 95% confidence intervals) by major causes of death were computed for three geographical regions (North, Center, South) and the capital (Chisinau). Changes in life expectancy at birth were decomposed by age and cause of death using Andreev’s method.

Results

Between 2014 and 2019, life expectancy in Moldova increased by 1.4 years, largely driven by reductions in cardiovascular mortality (+0.5 years) among older adults and external mortality (+0.4 years) among younger adults. These gains were most pronounced in Chisinau (+0.74 years) for cardiovascular mortality and in other regions for external mortality. The COVID-19 pandemic had a severe impact, particularly on the best-performing regions, with life expectancy dropping by 3.8 years in Chisinau and 2.7 years in the North. In contrast, the Center and South, with lower pre-pandemic life expectancies, experienced less dramatic declines. Post-pandemic recovery (2021–2023) was marked by substantial improvements in life expectancy, primarily due to reductions in mortality from infectious diseases (+1.83 years) and cardiovascular diseases (+0.9 years). Chisinau demonstrated the largest recovery (+4.47 years), reflecting its significant pandemic-related losses.

Conclusions

Moldova’s life expectancy progress in 2014–2023 was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with regional disparities evident. While reductions in external mortality contributed to narrowing regional gaps, inequalities in cardiovascular mortality persisted. The recent progress, particularly in the capital, primarily reflects post-pandemic recovery and should be interpreted with caution, especially regarding its sustainability.

Application of the WHO Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0 (WHODAS 2.0) to Patients before Admission to a Rehabilitation Day Hospital to Predict Potential Disability

Poster

Dr. Darja Stankeviča¹, Dr. Anda Nulle²

1. Department of Residency, Rīga Stradiņš University, 2. Rehabilitation Medicine Centre, Pauls Stradins Clinical University Hospital

Objectives*

To predict potential disability before rehabilitation course by application of WHODAS 2.0 according to the World Health Organisation.

Materials and Methods

WHODAS 2.0 is a practical, generic assessment instrument that can measure health and disability at population level or in clinical practice. WHODAS 2.0 captures the level of functioning in six domains of life. The WHODAS 2.0 of 135 patients, who were admitted in PSKUS rehabilitation day hospital in 2022-2023 years, who filled WHO-DAS 2.0 was analysed retrospectively. WHODAS 2.0 included 36 questions about –cognition, mobility, self-care, getting along, life activities (household and work) and participation. The percentage of predictable potential disability was calculated by formula “*overall score= sum of 36 answers/144*”.

Results

The mean age of the patients was 55,34 ± 11,54 years. Patients attended the day hospital according to a set programme: oncology 37, neurology 24, cardiology 7, musculoskeletal disorders 58, after infection diseases 9. Rehabilitation received 112 woman (83%) and 23 men (17%). Mean predicted potential disability before rehabilitation course 25,67%± 16,33%.

Conclusions

WHODAS 2.0 showed clinically meaningful results according to the patient’s diagnosis which means the patient needs rehabilitation to prevent disability progression.

Gendered Disparities in Unmet Healthcare Needs among the Elderly During COVID-19 Pandemic in Latvia

Poster

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1. Institute of Public Health, Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences, Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various aspects of daily life, including limited access to healthcare services, this study aimed to analyse associated factors of self-reported unmet healthcare needs among individuals aged 50 and older during the first wave of the pandemic (March to June/July 2020) and one year later (June/July 2021).

Materials and Methods

Data from the “Survey on Health, Aging and Retirement in Europe” (SHARE) included respondents aged 50+ from the first and second waves of the SHARE Corona survey and wave 8 of the regular survey in Latvia. Unmet healthcare needs were analyzed through responses on forgoing treatment, postponed appointments, or inability to secure care, summarized in a binary variable; explanatory variables included demographics and health factors. Univariate and multivariate binary logistic regression identified associated factors, adjusting for demographics and economic variables. Analyses were conducted in IBM SPSS Statistics version 26.0, with significance at $p < 0.05$.

Results

The sample comprised 647 older adults from Latvia (62.9 % female) with a mean age of 68.6 (SD ± 9.6). After adjustment for socio-demographic factors, unmet healthcare needs were associated with poor economic status in summer 2021 (OR=1.8, $p=0.048$), chronic conditions (OR=2.1, $p=0.01$), and functional limitations based on instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) (OR=2.2, $p=0.009$) and global activity limitation indicator (GALI) (OR=2.1, $p=0.011$) among females. Higher education (tertiary, OR=4.3, $p=0.076$) and economic inactivity (OR=13.9, $p=0.032$) were statistically significant factors among males.

Conclusions

This study highlighted gendered disparities in unmet healthcare needs during the COVID-19 pandemic in Latvia, emphasizing the importance of chronic condition management and addressing gender-specific barriers to ensure equitable healthcare access during crises.

Inequalities in Lifestyle Changes among the Elderly during and after COVID-19 Pandemic in Lithuania

Poster

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Objectives*

To analyse lifestyle changes and its inequalities among elderly during and after COVID-19 pandemic in Lithuania, with a particular focus on eating habits, physical activity, social engagement and harmful habits.

Materials and Methods

The representative sample of Lithuanian population over 65 years old (1503 individuals) was involved in the questionnaire survey, performed in January 2024.

Results

Most of the eating habits and the body weight of the elderly did not change during the COVID-19 pandemic in Lithuania. However, physical activity decreased, face-to-face communication became rarer, while remote communication increased. During pandemic, the increased frequency of snacking was more often indicated by persons with lower than secondary education, working, receiving higher incomes, as well as increased snacking and body weight were more prevalent among younger, single or overweight persons; increased body weight during the pandemic was more often mentioned by the persons who assessed their health poorly. Physical activity decreased more often among rural residents and groups with higher or college education; face-to-face communication has become rarer among younger people, rural residents, pensioners, disabled, people with higher income and those with overweight, while remote communication has increased among women, respondents with a university education and those with an average income ($p < 0.05$). Nearly half of the respondents indicated that the changes in food consumption and smoking frequency that occurred during the pandemic remained after it. After the pandemic, the habits of consuming fast food, confectionery or other sweets and changes in body weight mostly remained, while the patterns of communication returned to the pre-pandemic level. Most of the healthy lifestyle habits formed during the pandemic persisted after the pandemic.

Conclusions

During the COVID-19 pandemic in Lithuania, there were various changes in eating habits, physical activity, communication patterns, and harmful habits. Certain habits formed during the pandemic continued afterward, particularly among specific groups of the elderly Lithuanian population.

Social and Behavioral Determinants of Health Inequality in Lithuania and Central Europe: Findings from the European Social Survey

Poster

Dr. Rasa Indriliunaite¹

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Objectives*

Social inequalities in health are defined as systematic differences in health between different groups in society. These differences exist not only due to limited access to health care; there are many other social and economic factors, such as poor living and working conditions, income differences, low education, or general macro policies of the country, which determine social health inequalities (Eikemo et al., 2008; Huijts, 2011; 2017). Studies show that people with higher education, professional status, or income have lower morbidity and longer life expectancy (Eikemo et al., 2016). These differences are also observed in mortality statistics, as well as in terms of access to health care, use of health care services, and the quality of services received, where groups with lower socio-economic status find themselves in a more disadvantageous situation. This study aims to provide an overview of the main social and behavioral determinants of health inequality across Lithuania and Central European countries.

Materials and Methods

The empirical part of the study is based on data from the 11th round of the European Social Survey. This round contains a rotating module on social inequalities in health and their determinants.

Results

Results show that lack of healthcare access, risky behavior, and poor working conditions, are reported as the main factors that have a clear impact on the physical and mental health of the respondents. There are no clear differences in geographical (regional) dimensions for these measures but several differences in gender – between men and women in most social determinants of health are observed. Nevertheless, women consulted doctors twice as often as men, results indicate that problems of accessibility and unmet needs for healthcare in the past year were more actual for women. The percentage of the usage of alternative treatment (massage therapy, and herbal treatment) was higher for women than men.

Total Protein and Albumin Variation by Age and Gender in Adult Latvian Population

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University; "Centrālā laboratorija" Ltd, 2. "Centrālā laboratorija" Ltd

Objectives*

To evaluate age-related changes of total protein (TP) and albumin (ALB) in single-laboratory cohort.

Materials and Methods

16153 consecutive TP and ALB tests ("Centrālā laboratorija", 2020-2024, Cobas Pro c503, ROCHE). M:F 1:1.8, age 18-97 (mean 56.9). Statistical analysis performed by IBM SPSS v27.

Results

TP and ALB levels fell between age 18-29 and 80+, mean TP from 73.6 to 69.71g/L (-5.4%) and ALB from 45.88 to 41.49g/L (-10.5%), ANOVA $p < 0.001$.

Dynamics was more pronounced in males. TP in females decreased from 73.07 to 69.57g/L (-4.8%), in males from 74.34 to 70.08g/L (-5.7%); albumin from 46.26 to 41.48g/L (-10.3%) in females, from 47.64 to 41.53g/L (-12.8%) in males ($p < 0.001$ for age and gender differences).

Rates of hypoproteinemia and hypoalbuminemia increased with age, respectively, from 4.4% to 21.3% and 1.2% to 8.7% ($p < 0.001$). Hyperproteinemia remained $< 1\%$; hyperalbuminemia decreased from 4.7% to 0.1% ($p < 0.001$). Hypoproteinemia rose from 5.4% to 22.1% in females and 3.2% to 19.0% in males ($p < 0.001$). Hypoalbuminemia increased from 1.0% to 8.5% in females and from 1.5% to 9.5% in males (age and gender $p < 0.001$).

Hyperalbuminemia in females decreased from 2.1% to 1.0%. Hyperalbuminemia rate in males was 7.8% at 18-29 and dropped to zero at 80+ ($p < 0.001$). Additional analysis showed peak at 21-26 (9.4%, $p < 0.001$) with simultaneously increased ALB (+0.79g/L, $p = 0.002$) and TP (+0.78g/L, $p = 0.017$).

Conclusions

Hypoproteinemia rate at age 80+ was $> 20\%$ and hypoalbuminemia rate almost 10%. That is high, even in pre-selected cohort. The changes are partly due to ageing, but in most cases there are probable social and medical reasons, related to diet restrictions and chronic diseases, with resulting hypoproteinemia aggravating these reasons. Active screening for hypoproteinemia and hypoalbuminemia in elderly seems to be indicated.

The study revealed unexpectedly high hyperalbuminemia rate in young males that may have medical issues. A reasonable explanation may be consuming excessive nutritional protein.

Health Promotion

Ethical Challenges in Translational Research: Managing Uncertainty, Transparency, and Hope in Alzheimer’s Research

Oral

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1. University of Latvia; Rīga Stradiņš University, 2. University of Latvia

Objectives*

The transition from basic research to clinical applications presents complex ethical challenges that require thoughtful navigation. This study investigates the ethical responsibilities of researchers involved in bridging basic and clinical research in the context of Alzheimer’s research. It specifically explores how researchers conceptualize the ethical challenges in the process of translation, navigate inherent uncertainties, address challenges in publishing negative results, and reflect on the broader implications of these issues, as well as how participants reflect on communication of basic research results to the society and patients.

Materials and Methods

The study is based on qualitative thematic analysis of four focus group discussions with basic and clinical researchers from the Baltics, Canada, the Netherlands, and Finland. The focus group discussions included 22 participants.

Results

Participants emphasized the complexity of translation and uncertainties that come with it, noting that the inherent differences between animal models and human studies demand cautious interpretation and clear communication. Lack of incentives to publish negative results were identified as a persistent challenge, with transparency in reporting highlighted as a critical ethical responsibility. Lack of transparency not only distorts the scientific record but also creates unrealistic expectations among patients and the broader public. While public hope and expectations were acknowledged as motivating forces in basic and translational research, they were also seen as an ethical responsibility requiring careful management. Participants emphasized the delicate balance between fostering hope and avoiding hype in communication with patients and general public.

Conclusions

Our findings suggest that addressing ethical challenges requires structured frameworks that prioritize reflection on ethical issues, transparency in publication of data, interdisciplinary collaboration to evaluate risk/benefit ratio in human studies, and the inclusion of diverse stakeholder perspectives in translation process. By navigating these ethical complexities, this study contributes to the development of frameworks that balance scientific integrity with societal expectations.

Parental Attitudes and Approach to Feeding Preschool Aged Children

Oral

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

This is the first study done in Latvia that addresses children’s nutrition with a focus on food parenting. The purpose of this study was to explore the development of eating habits in young children by assessing their carer’s approach to food parenting, and to identify the main reasons that interfere with healthy eating in families with young children in Latvia.

Materials and Methods

Participants were 479 parents or primary carers of at least one preschool aged child. Participants were invited to take part in the study via pre-schools in Latvia. Food parenting approach was assessed using the CFPQ questionnaire that was translated to Latvian language and adapted to the local environment. Participants were also asked about their opinions, priorities and concerns in regards to feeding their young children.

Results

Control methods of food parenting that are associated with poor long-term outcomes, such as pressure to eat, food as reward and food for emotional regulation were prevalent in the researched population. Child’s picky eating was named number one obstacle to healthy eating in participants’ households. Nevertheless, many of the participants were unknowingly encouraging pickiness through their food parenting approach. Parent’s / carer’s knowledge about The Healthy Eating Plate was linked to a higher vegetable consumption in preschool aged children. Food parenting approach was linked to family income.

Conclusions

Parents of young children are often underinformed about the development of eating habits in young children, particularly the natural phase of pickiness that young children often exhibit. Food parenting training should be offered to families as a public health strategy. Continuous longitudinal research is needed to fully assess the effects of food parenting on a child’s long-term health.

Sexual Health of People over 50 Years of Age in Latvia

Oral

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1. Institute of Public Health, Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences, Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

The life expectancy of people all over the world is increasing and health issues of older people are becoming an important part of health care in many countries. Sexual health is part of health and well-being in all ages, however, it has been neglected for long time in many societies including Latvia. Objective of this study is to better understand sexual behavior of women and men over 50 years of age in Latvia and existing gaps.

Materials and Methods

Data related to sexual health of people 50 to 64 years of age were retrieved from the representative national sexual and reproductive health (SRH) survey "Research on factors and behaviour affecting the SRH of the population of Latvia" - carried out 2020 to 2023 within the framework of the procurement of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia (No.VM 2019/18/ESF). The survey was conducted with stratified random sampling at the respondents' places of residence.

Results

Only 31% of women and 36.8% of men 50 to 64 years of age participating in the survey evaluated their SRH as very good or rather good, but 22% of women and 34.8% of men were not satisfied with their sexual life. The proportion of self-evaluated prevalence of sexual health problems in this age group was 16.7% for women and 12.1% for men. Only 26% of men and 10% of women used male condom during casual sex. Almost every fifth woman has experienced sexual problems related to menopause, but only 11.5% of women have used hormonal replacement therapy.

Conclusions

There is low sexual health literacy of people over 50 years of age in Latvia. Further in-depth research is required to study the reasons of sexual behavior of this age group and to develop a comprehensive action plan on improving sexual health during the life-course.

Ensuring Cognitive Health for Next Generation: Do Maternal Dietary Habits Meet the Recommendations Regarding Iodine Intake During Lactation Period – Initial Observations from an Ongoing Research Project

Poster

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Objectives*

To evaluate maternal dietary habits within the national Latvian dietary recommendations regarding iodine intake for lactating women.

Materials and Methods

Data from twenty-six participants were obtained from the ongoing research project “Human Milk Iodine Concentration as a Biomarker of Iodine Status in Lactating Women and Exclusively Breastfed Infants”^{*} (Rīga Stradiņš University Research Ethics Committee Approval No. 2-PĒK-4/623/2024). The food frequency questionnaire and 72-hour food diary were used to evaluate participants’ dietary habits. Descriptive statistics were calculated using Microsoft Excel 360.

^{*}supported by the project “Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of LBTU for Excellence in Studies and Research”, funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

Results

The initial observations of the main iodine-containing foods in the diet show that the fish consumption among the participants did not meet dietary recommendations (i.e., consumption two times per week). The average fish intake was only 1.07 portions or 128.27 g per week. However, it varied among participants, ranging from – 0.00 to 402.50 g per week. The consumption of dairy products also did not reach the recommended three to four portions per day (average daily intake only 2.85 portions^{*}). Less than half of the participants (n=11) noted using iodized salt in the household. Only nine participants were consuming dietary supplements with daily iodine dose ranging from 150 to 225 µg.

^{*}one portion is 30 g of cheese, 250 ml of milk, yoghurt, kefir, etc., or 100 g of cottage cheese (Dietary Recommendations for Women During Lactation Period. Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia, 2022).

Conclusions

Preliminary findings indicate insufficient iodine intake among participants. Iodized salt is rarely used in households. Not all participants were taking extra iodine via dietary supplements. The iodine content of human milk samples collected as part of a research project should be assessed to judge the iodine status of lactating women more accurately.

Impact of Pulmonary Yoga Module on Lung Capacity of COVID-19 Adult Survivors

Poster

Mr. Adarsh Tomar¹

1. Master's Study Programme "Health Management", Faculty of Social Sciences, Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

There is a hypothesis that yoga improves lung capacity significantly, Lungs are the front-line fighter against any pathogens or viruses that intrude inside the body, and those with healthy lungs are less likely to get infected by viruses and tend to have better immunity. This study is going to delve into the efficacy of selective yogic practices on the lung capacity of coronavirus adult survivors.

Materials and Methods

Fifty subjects of 18–30 years age elected for the research work with the peer group range of 18–30 years (mean = 22.24), lung capacity, level of SpO₂, and pulse rate of selected subjects were measured twice prior and end of the intervention for each participant. Expiratory peak flow measurements were taken of subjects to know the lung capacity through the expiratory peak flow meter. A pulse oximeter has been used to take data for SpO₂ and pulse rate. Selected yogic practices were intervened for 2 months. The before-test and after-test data were taken, stored, and tabulated to find the efficacy of Yogic interventions. The simple random sampling technique applied for the selection procedure and expulsion standard is 10%.

Results

After 8 weeks of yoga intervention (selected yogic practice) on day 60th, posttest data were taken and assessed on different significance levels (α). The mean peak flow was 291 and 353.80 before and after the intervention, respectively ($P = 2.711$). The mean SpO₂ was 97.9 and 98.74 earlier and later in the intervention, respectively ($P = 0.0134$). The mean pulse rate was 88.00 and 84.90 prior and completion of the intervention, respectively ($P = 0.2008$).

Conclusions

Indeed, as per the results and evidence, statistically significant changes in peak flow, level of SpO₂, and pulse rate and selective yogic practices significantly affect the lung capacity; hence can be used for post-COVID-19 treatment as integrative, alternative, or complementary medicine.

Impact of the Fitness Industry on National Economy and Public Health

Poster

Mrs. Oksana Zate¹, Dr. Una Veseta²

1. Oksana Zāte, 2. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

Health issues related to a sedentary lifestyle, such as cardiovascular diseases and diabetes, increase the burden on healthcare systems and the economy. Promoting physical activity and accessible fitness infrastructure can improve public health and productivity, while reducing healthcare costs.

Objective: To assess the potential of the fitness industry in improving public health and fostering economic growth by analyzing its impact on productivity, healthcare expenditure, and the overall economy. The study examines how the fitness sector can alleviate the economic burden associated with sedentary behaviors.

Materials and Methods

Methodology: Statistical data from the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, State Social Insurance Agency, State Employment Agency, and National Health Service were analyzed, focusing on expenses related to disability, sickness benefits, and medication reimbursements. A survey on physical activity, adherence to WHO recommendations, and self-reported health was conducted among 95 randomly selected respondents (average age 42) via Facebook and WhatsApp. The data was processed using descriptive statistics.

Results

Key Results:

Increase in Disability: In 2022, 31.6% of workers were absent due to disability, up from 24.3% in 2021.

Sickness Benefit Costs: In 2022, sickness benefits increased to 232.6 million euros (1.87% of the national budget). Around 60% of these costs are linked to sedentary lifestyles.

Indirect Costs: The cost of each absence day in 2022 was 23.98 euros, with employers also facing additional expenses related to sickness leave and replacements.

Survey Results:

- **Activity Levels:** 58.9% of respondents consider themselves physically active, but only 42.2% meet WHO activity recommendations.
- **Interest in Fitness:** 92.6% would visit a fitness professional if services were partially funded by the state.

Conclusions

Conclusion: Investing in health promotion and accessible fitness infrastructure can reduce healthcare costs and improve public health. Long-term initiatives in the fitness industry can alleviate the economic burden of sedentary lifestyles and stimulate economic activity.

Knowledge of Gynecologists and Obstetricians, Residents and Midwives about the Diagnosis and Treatment of Cervical Precancerous Changes in Latvia

Poster

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Objectives*

Cervical cancer is one of the few oncological diseases that can be prevented by vaccination as well as by identifying and preventing precancerous changes of the cervix in a screening program.

Latvia still has one of the highest rates of cervical cancer in Europe. The reason for this can be various factors - low involvement of the population in preventive measures, insufficient coordination and monitoring of the screening program. An important factor is to follow the guidelines to detect precancerous changes.

This study will help to monitor the knowledge of specialists of cervical precancerous changes in Latvia. This knowledge will be taken into account when planning future education activities.

Materials and Methods

Research method, material was anonymous multiple-choice questionnaire with 26 questions.

Participants was gynecologists, obstetricians, residents, midwives. An anonymous questionnaire was completed.

Results

Most of the study participants were women with an average age of 48 working in outpatient practice. All the participants know that screening is performed between ages 25 and 70.

The opinion of professionals about when to repeat screening for cervical precancerous conditions if the onco-cytological result is A0 is divided in halves - first half's answer is after 3 months; second half's answer is after 6 months.

82 percent of participants think that general practitioners should actively influence their patients to use the screening program.

79 percent of participants think that the use of self-tests can reach a wider range of the population, as some women do not go to the doctor for personal reasons (lack of transport, heavy workload, fear of the doctor, young mothers).

Conclusions

The results of the study make us consider the involvement of private doctors in the national screening program and the open access to the screening numbers. Taking into account the results of the study, there is a positive impression of the competence of professionals in the prevention and treatment of precancerous diseases of the cervix.

Knowledge of Latvian Family Physicians on Breastfeeding and Related Issues

Poster

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Objectives*

Scientific research consistently supports the positive impact of breastfeeding on the health of both infants and mothers. Given the check-ups and consultations provided within primary healthcare for pregnant women, women in the postpartum period, and infants, it is crucial to highlight the significance of family physicians' role and expertise in matters related to infant feeding, breastfeeding, and related issues.

Materials and Methods

A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted in Latvia from June to October 2024. The questionnaire consists of 30 true/false statements about breastfeeding as well as several questions on demographic data and ways of acquiring knowledge. Statistical analysis was performed with collected data with IBM SPSS.

Results

Of the 1,226 family doctors invited to participate, 240 (19.6%) completed the survey. The majority of respondents were female (93.3%). The most represented age groups were 31–40 (28.7%), 41–50 (20.4%) and over 60 years (37.1%). The mean knowledge score was $78\% \pm 13\%$ (SD). High level of knowledge (23 or more correct answers from 30) was demonstrated by 64.2% of participants. Most respondents (79.2%) acquired information about breastfeeding through self-directed learning. However, 48.3% of doctors held misconceptions about the role of colostrum in preventing neonatal jaundice, and 51.7% incorrectly recommended discontinuing breastfeeding in cases of cracked nipples. We found differences between participants' age and level of knowledge: the younger the participant, the higher their level of knowledge ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusions

Family physicians generally displayed good knowledge of breastfeeding, however, older doctors were more likely to have an average level of knowledge, whereas younger doctors tended to exhibit a higher level. Health-related professions should ensure access to up-to-date information on breastfeeding and its associated challenges.

Mental Health in Older Women: Focus on Health Status

Poster

Dr. Asta Beniusiene¹, Dr. Vyte Kontautiene¹, Prof. Birute Strukcinskiene¹, Dr. Jonas Jurgaitis¹

1. Klaipeda University

Objectives*

Mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and stress, increase with age in older women.

The study aimed to evaluate the relationship between mental health - depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms - and overall health status in older women, with an emphasis on the physical and psychological domains.

Materials and Methods

A community-based cross-sectional study was conducted in Klaipeda, Lithuania, with 306 women aged 65–80 attending the Third Age University.

Mental health symptoms were measured using the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21), while health status was assessed with the Suboptimal Health Status Questionnaire (SHSQ-25). Statistical analyses included t-tests, correlation analysis, and effect size evaluations to determine the influence of mental health on health status.

Results

Mental health challenges were prevalent, with anxiety affecting 62.4% of participants, depression impacting 48.4%, and stress observed in 29.8%. Anxiety demonstrated the strongest correlation with health domains, particularly fatigue (Cohen's $d = 0.950$), cardiovascular symptoms ($d = 0.757$), and mental status ($d = 1.036$). Depression also significantly influenced fatigue ($d = 0.764$) and mental status ($d = 0.816$). Stress exhibited moderate effects across all health domains. Sociodemographic factors, such as age and marital status, showed minimal influence on psychical health outcomes, except for women living alone, who had slightly lower depression scores ($p = 0.015$).

Conclusions

The findings highlight the significant burden of anxiety and depression on the overall health of older women. Analysis of the results revealed that depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms have a significant association with fatigue, cardiovascular disorders, and mental status, with anxiety symptoms showing the strongest associations. It underscores the need for targeted mental health interventions in older women. Early identification of the symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress and tailored support strategies could mitigate mental health disorders and enhance the quality of life in this vulnerable population.

Physical Activity Habits and their Determinants among Healthcare Students: Descriptive Study

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University, 2. RSU Latvian Academy of Sport Education

Objectives*

This study examined physical activity (PA) habits among healthcare students, focusing on activity frequency, duration, types, and determinants. It also assessed the prevalence of sedentary behavior and its association with students' study and work commitments.

Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional survey collected demographic data, PA habits, and responses to the International Physical Activity Questionnaire - Short Form (IPAQ-SF). A total of 435 (N=386 female; N=50 male) health care students from RSU participated in the study, with a mean age of 23.5 years (SD 6.87). Minutes of PA level and sitting time were compared to the Latvian cohort in the Special Eurobarometer 525 survey. Statistical analysis was performed using Jamovi version 2.6.17, employing descriptive statistics (mean, median, standard deviation), the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality, and the one-sample proportion test (χ^2) to assess significance.

Results

Most students rated their PA as moderate (52.6%), with 33.1% reporting low and 14.3% high activity levels. About 50.3% monitored PA using smart devices. Common regular activities included strength training (24.8%), brisk or Nordic walking (13.8%), and cardio workouts (12.4%). Many students were unemployed (45.1%) or worked part-time (34%), with work-related PA mostly light (25.7%) or very light (12.6%). Leisure time was primarily sedentary (47.6%), though 52.4% engaged in physical activities. Key motivations for PA included improving well-being (78.6%), health (66.2%), and appearance (60.2%), while barriers were lack of time (73.3%) and motivation (50.3%).

Approximately 42.3% met sufficient PA levels (above 3000 MET minutes), 49.5% achieved minimal activity, and 8.1% were insufficiently active (≤ 600 MET minutes). Compared to the Latvian sample, students reported less vigorous and moderate PA and more sedentary behavior.

Conclusions

A significant portion of students lacked adequate exercise. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to raise awareness of the benefits of PA and to provide opportunities that align with student lifestyle.

Problem of Overweight: Research Experience in Health Studies in Latvia

Poster

Dr. Iveta Briška¹

1. Project Manager; Research Center SKDS

Objectives*

In Latvia, as in many other countries worldwide, overweight and obesity are prevalent issues affecting children, adolescents, adults, and seniors. The aim of this presentation is to provide an overview and summarize the wide range of studies conducted in Latvia that have explored the problem of overweight and obesity in the country.

Materials and Methods

The presentation covers the following studies:

1. “Study on Physical Activity, Dietary Habits, and Body Mass Index of 5–6-Year-Old Preschool Children in Latvia” (2020-2022) – Surveyed at least 7,800 respondents.
2. “Study of Anthropometric Parameters of Children and the School Environment in Latvia” (Various years, with the most recent data from the 2022/2023 academic year) – Measured at least 6,000 respondents (1st and 3rd grade students).
3. “Study of Health Habits of Latvian Students” (Various years, with the most recent data from the 2022/2023 academic year) – Measured at least 3,000 respondents (5th, 7th, and 9th grade students).
4. “Study of Health-Affecting Habits of Latvian Residents” (2022) – Surveyed 3,500 respondents aged 15 to 74 years.
5. “Study of Habits and Functional Abilities Affecting the Health of Latvian Residents Above Working Age” (2018-2020) – Surveyed at least 2,500 respondents.

Results

Overweight and obesity are primarily caused by unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles. The studies indicate that social behavior, living conditions, lifestyle choices, and various social factors play a significant role in weight gain.

Conclusions

The implementation of these studies across all age groups in Latvia allows for comprehensive data analysis, using and interpreting correlations between a wide range of sociodemographic indicators and statistical variables.

The results provide valuable and extensive information for healthcare professionals and serve as the basis for recommendations for parents, as well as healthcare and education policymakers.

Psychological Factors and Adherence in Patients with Cardiovascular Illness

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death in Latvia, as in the rest of the world. Despite the availability of information and recommendations from doctors and specialists regarding the necessity of taking medications and adopting healthy lifestyle habits, patients with cardiovascular diseases often exhibit low adherence. The aim of this study is to explore additional psychological factors to better understand what contributes to adherence.

Materials and Methods

This cross-sectional preliminary study included a sample of 32 respondents with diagnosed cardiovascular illness (n=32), 46% of whom were female (n=15), aged between 33 and 75 years (M=59.66; SD=10.71). Data were collected in hospital and GP practices. Participants completed a sociodemographic data questionnaire; Illness Perception Questionnaire (Moss-Morris et al., 2002, adapted into Latvian by Babre, 2016); General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995, adapted into Latvian by Griskevica & Iltner, 2021) and Adherent Behaviour Questionnaire (developed by Skaldere-Darmudasa & Sudraba, 2022), this nine-item measure evaluates adherence behaviors such as medication intake, healthy lifestyle habits, and health monitoring. Multidimensional Health Locus of Control Scale (Wallston, Strudler Wallston, & DeVellis, 1978), this 18-item measure assesses Internal/Chance/Powerful Others/Doctors locus of control. Latvian adaptation is conducted as part of this study. Additionally, five custom questions assessed participants' knowledge about medication and their need for a better understanding of their illness.

Results

Preliminary data indicate a significant positive correlation (*p<0.05) between knowledge about medication intake, adherence behaviours, and self-efficacy. A negative correlation was observed between knowledge about medication intake and the desire to receive education on maintaining health. Furthermore, internal locus of control correlated with reliance on doctors (**p<0.01), the healthy lifestyle subscale (*p<0.05), and self-control (*p<0.05).

Conclusions

The findings suggest that knowledge about medication intake, a better understanding of the illness, and an internal locus of control contribute to improved adherence behaviours.

Reliability Testing of the Latvian Version of the Assessment Tool “Life Balance Inventory”

Poster

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Objectives*

Occupational therapists address lifestyle and activity balance, yet few assessment tools exist in Latvia for evaluating activity balance. “Life Balance Inventory” evaluates congruence between desired and actual activity engagement. Aim: To adapt the “Life Balance Inventory” into Latvian and evaluate its reliability within Latvian occupational therapy practice.

Materials and Methods

quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive study. Participants were selected according to inclusion and exclusion criteria. Participants completed an online questionnaire of socio-demographic data and the Latvian version of the assessment tool “Life Balance Inventory” (Cinovska, A., Liepiņa, Z., 2024). The translation process was based on the “Guidelines for the Process of Cross-Cultural Adaptation of Self-Report Measures” (Beaton et.al., 2000). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, test-retest reliability using interclass correlation coefficient (ICC) and Weighted Cohen’s Kappa were used to test the reliability of the instrument.

Results

94 participants took part in the original study, but only 57 took part in the retest, of whom 94.7% were women with a mean age of 27.2 years. 56.1% of all participants were students of the Rīga Stradiņš University Bachelor’s study programme “Occupational Therapy”, but 43.9% were occupational therapists. The instrument showed generally good internal consistency results (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.780 - 0.828$), with low to acceptable subscale internal consistency in the first test (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.410 - 0.631$) and acceptable to good internal consistency in the retest (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.649 - 0.711$). The instrument showed overall good reliability results or ICC = 0.843 with a 95% confidence interval of 0.711 - 0.912. The subscales, on the other hand, performed mainly moderate to good (ICC = 0.681 - 0.817). Cohen’s Weighted Kappa indicates that the instrument has moderate agreement overall and moderate to good agreement on the subscales when retested after one week ($k = 0.482 - 0.61$).

Conclusions

The “Life Balance Inventory” tool can be used in occupational therapy practice.

Role of Family and Social Support in Smoking Cessation Attempts in Latvia

Poster

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1. Institute of Public Health, Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences, Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

This study aimed to investigate the association between smoking cessation attempts and the role of family members and the social environment among adults in Latvia.

Materials and Methods

This cross-sectional study analysed secondary data from the Disease Prevention and Control Centre's study on health behaviour among the Latvian adult population in 2022. It examined the association between smoking cessation attempts and the social environment, including family member support and smoking restriction rules at home, car, and workplace. The study employed logistic regression analysis and adjusted for age, sex, and education level.

Results

The study population was 1722 current and past smokers, of whom 67% (n=1169) were current smokers (69.5% were men, and 38.9% were 18-39). Of the whole study population, 33.4% (n=662) have never attempted to quit smoking. A non-smoking life partner (aOR=1.58, 95% CI: 1.18-2.11, p<0.05) and no adult smoking at home (aOR=3.19, 95% CI: 2.57-3.96, p<0.001) in the presence of others increased the odds of a smoking cessation attempt. Additionally, a positive association between smoking cessation attempts and a family member's suggestion to quit smoking (aOR=2.34 95% TI: 1.80-3.05, p<0.001) was found. Both a complete ban on smoking at home (aOR=2.38, 95% CI: 1.61-3.51, p<0.001) and a ban on smoking in rooms where other people are present (aOR=1.97, 95% CI: 1.29-3.01, p<0.001) increased the odds of a smoking cessation attempt. No significant association between smoking cessation attempts and underaged children and smoking restrictions in cars or a workplace was determined.

Conclusions

A supportive environment and strict smoking restriction rules, particularly at home, as well as having a non-smoking partner and family members' encouragement to quit smoking, have a significant positive association with smoking cessation attempts. These results emphasise the importance of a comprehensive approach to smoking cessation, involving family members in supporting smokers and implementing strict smoking restriction rules at home.

Health Workforce, Leadership, Interaction with Education

Teamwork Perception and Safety Attitude of Inpatient Nurses

Oral

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

The study “Teamwork perception and safety attitude of inpatient nurses” aims to explore the relationship between safety attitudes and teamwork perceptions among inpatient nurses and to evaluate differences in these perceptions based on sociodemographic data.

Materials and Methods

A quantitative, nonexperimental, cross-sectional descriptive correlation study was conducted using two structured instruments: the Teamwork Perception Questionnaire (T-TTPQ) and the Safety Attitude Questionnaire (SAQ). A total of 148 inpatient nurses from two hospitals participated in the study.

Results

The overall safety attitude index for hospital nurses is at a high level ($M = 73.98$). However, working conditions received the lowest evaluation ($M = 66.7$), attributed to insufficient staffing levels, which significantly influence nurses’ perceptions of their work environment. Within the safety climate subscale, the lowest score ($M = 68.57$) was associated with difficulties in discussing errors, indicating challenges in openly reporting mistakes.

The overall assessment of teamwork perception is positive ($M = 3.97$). However, communication emerged as a critical area for improvement, receiving the lowest score ($M = 3.78$). This finding suggests many organizations lack a standardized system for information exchange, impacting teamwork. Communication shows a moderately strong correlation with safety climate ($r = 0.46$; $p < 0.001$), emphasizing its role in fostering a positive and secure work environment. Additionally, teamwork climate correlates closely with safety climate, further underlining the interconnected nature of these aspects in supporting a culture of safety and collaboration.

Conclusions

The study highlights the critical link between teamwork perceptions and safety attitudes among inpatient nurses. While teamwork perceptions are consistent across demographic groups, targeted efforts to improve communication and safety climate may further enhance safety attitudes. These findings emphasize the importance of fostering effective teamwork and a robust safety culture in hospital environments to ensure high-quality patient care.

Violence Experienced by Students During Professional Practices: Experiences of Midwifery Students

Oral

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Objectives*

This study explores the experiences of violence encountered by midwifery students during their professional practice, aiming to understand the types of violence faced and their impacts on students' education and well-being.

Materials and Methods

A qualitative research design was employed, utilizing semi-structured interviews with 30 midwifery students from various institutions across the country. Participants were recruited through a purposive sampling method to ensure diversity in demographics and background experiences. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes, focusing on students' personal accounts of violence during clinical placements, including the nature of incidents, emotional responses, and coping strategies. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes within the qualitative data, with codes generated from participants' responses to capture the essence of their experiences.

Results

The analysis revealed three main themes: 1) Prevalence of Violence, where students reported facing verbal (62%) and psychological (38%) abuse, with accounts of intimidation and humiliation being common. 2) Impact on Education, highlighted by stories of anxiety and decreased confidence in clinical skills, affecting 70% of participants' learning experiences. 3) Normalization of Violence, where 80% of students felt that such behaviors were entrenched in the clinical culture, leading to reluctance in reporting incidents. Many students expressed a desire for more supportive environments and better institutional policies to address these issues.

Conclusions

This study emphasizes the significant issue of violence against midwifery students during professional practice and its detrimental effects on their well-being and educational outcomes. The findings call for urgent attention to create safer clinical environments and implement comprehensive support mechanisms. Future research should focus on developing interventions and policies aimed at reducing violence in healthcare settings and improving the experiences of midwifery students.

Burnout Syndrome of Nurses in Intensive Care Units in Latvia during COVID-19

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the prevalence and severity of burnout syndrome among intensive care unit (ICU) nurses in Latvia, with a focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the study aims to assess three key dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Additional objectives include identifying correlations between demographic factors (e.g., education level, marital status) and burnout severity, as well as highlighting organizational factors that may exacerbate burnout in ICU settings.

The study seeks to contribute to understanding the extent of burnout among ICU nurses and provide evidence-based recommendations for mitigating burnout through targeted interventions, with the ultimate goal of improving both nurse well-being and patient care quality.

Materials and Methods

A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted, gathering data from 90 intensive care nurses across various regions of Latvia. The Maslach Burnout Inventory was used to measure burnout levels.

Results

The results indicated high levels of emotional exhaustion ($M = 24.71$, $SD = 8.87$) and moderate depersonalization ($M = 8.28$, $SD = 5.73$). A statistically significant correlation was found between education level and emotional exhaustion, with higher educated nurses reporting greater exhaustion.

Conclusions

This study highlights a significant prevalence of burnout among ICU nurses in Latvia, especially in the domains of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues, leading to an urgent need for systematic interventions. Addressing burnout requires a multi-faceted approach, including optimizing staffing levels, reducing workload, and providing emotional and psychological support. The study also indicates that personal factors, such as marital status and education level, influence burnout risk. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of burnout interventions and ensure sustained improvements in nurse well-being and patient care.

Evidence-based Nursing Education Based on J. Bruner's Spiral Concept

Poster

*Dr. Danguolė Šakalytė*¹

1. Higher Education Institution / Utenos kolegija

Objectives*

To describe the teaching of evidence-based nursing (EBN), based on J. Bruner's spiral concept, through the experiences of nursing students and lecturers

Materials and Methods

In total, 75 nursing students, 14 teachers of Utenos kolegija / Higher Education Institution participated in the research activities. The research concept chosen is L. Norton's (2019) pedagogical activity research. An individual written survey of teachers and students is conducted after the completion of the second cycle of research in order to reveal the experiences of teachers and students about teaching EBN. Qualitative analysis of content is chosen for qualitative data analysis. Qualitative data are processed using the Atlas.ti program version 24

Results

According to the students who participated in the study, EBN education is defined as nursing education based on scientific evidence, focused on the importance of applying evidence in nursing practice, in order to ensure effective and safe patient care. According to the teachers, in order to organize the five-step EBN education more effectively, it is necessary to strengthen the cooperation of teachers and promote the integration of subjects. During the study, when evaluating the positive and negative aspects of EBN education. Despite the difficulties encountered, students are satisfied with the new experience and the acquired knowledge and skills that are necessary for the nursing profession. The main challenges for teachers are choosing appropriate teaching methods and conveying information during EBN education

Conclusions

Evidence-based nursing education provides the prerequisites for teamwork, discussion and open exchange of ideas in order to better understand aspects of patient well-being and nursing. However negative aspects are also noticeable: insufficient skills of teachers in the field of assessing the relevance of scientific research and the abundance of scientific research and the question of its reliability, the absence of a culture of evidence-based practice in practice settings

Fostering Ethical Climate and Ensuring Safety in Nursing: Pilot Study Results in Latvia

Poster

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Objectives*

High quality healthcare is a priority for every profession today, and is linked to both patient safety and satisfaction. Recent studies have shown that professional issues such as ethics, ethical safety and dilemmas have a significant impact on the quality of care work. Ethical safety is an important part of a healthcare professional's competence and scientific progress gives rise to new challenges every day.

Objectives

The objective of the research was to translate in Latvian and perform adaptation process of the questionnaires to understand the challenges that healthcare professionals face in relation to the climates that they work.

Materials and Methods

2 Instruments used for study: The Swedish Ethical Climate Questionnaire, 10 items (SwECQ; Grönlund et al. 2019), The Ethical Safety Questionnaire, 11 items (ESA; Poikkeus et al. 2020). The questionnaire has five sections- all questionnaires, demographic data and one open-ended question to freely describe an encountered ethical situation and how they manage it.

Used data collection tool: Webropol

Timeline May-Sep 2023.

Results

Total 94 nurses from Latvia as respondents took part in the study. Age range 22 till 64 years (Median=46.5), average for practicing in nursing 18 years (1.00-48.00) and work experience in last workplace 8.8 years (0.5 – 48.00).

Averages (frequencies and descriptives) for The Ethical Safety Questionnaire and for The Swedish Ethical Climate Questionnaire were calculated.

The reliability statistical parameter Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each item and for both scales and the results are quite high (for The Ethical Safety Questionnaire it is 0.887 and for The Swedish Ethical Climate Questionnaire it is 0.813).

Conclusions

Data analysis shows that Cronbach's alpha numbers in all subscales are quite high, which means good internal reliability of items and scales.

It would be desirable to carry out another study, selecting respondents by age, gender, length of work.

Impact of Headaches on Nurses' Work Ability and Work Inability

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

Headaches are the most common health problem among the society, and medical workers, including nurses, may encounter during work hours. Aim of the study to find out the existence of headaches in nurses and their effect on working abilities

Materials and Methods

The research tool "Effect of headaches on work abilities and disabilities of nurses, evaluation questionnaire" was developed for the purpose of the research. The research sample was made up of general care nurses from two hospitals and twelve departments of different profiles. Shapiro-Wilk test, Spearman's Rank correlation coefficient, as well as various descriptive statistics indicators such as mode, arithmetic mean, sum and others were used to analyze the collected data.

Results

A total of 172 nurses participated in the study. The research took place for three months - from January 2024 to April 2024. It was observed that 91.9% of nurses experienced headaches during their work and a statistically significant relationship was determined between headaches and the impact of work abilities, because of which it can be concluded that headaches affect nurses' work abilities and as headaches increase, the impact on work abilities increases

Conclusions

The study concludes that while headaches significantly impact nurses' work abilities, their effect on work inability, as measured by the minimal number of work inability days, is relatively small. The current state of research indicates that while headaches significantly affect nurses' work ability, further studies are needed to explore the full extent of their impact on work inability and related factors.

Investigation on Relation between Nursing Quality Evaluation and Demographical Characteristics

Poster

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1. Department of Nursing, Faculty of Nursing, Medical Academy, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences

Objectives*

To determine the relation between nursing quality and demographic characteristics.

Materials and Methods

The data acquisition was conducted from 2023 June to 2023 August. Patients, their relatives, and nurses from 4 Lithuanian nursing institutions participated in the study. The standardized Quality evaluation questionnaires - nursing homes (QEQ-NH) questionnaires were used for the study to determine the quality of nursing care in nursing hospitals. A total of 254 (n) persons participated in the study. 165 questionnaires were distributed to nurses of nursing hospitals, of which 102 were answered and suitable for further analysis (response rate 61.8%). 112 patients and 40 relatives answered the questionnaire questions.

Results

A better assessment of patient-centered care ($r=-0,492$; $p<0,001$), safety ($r=-0,223$; $p<0,001$), leadership ($r=-0,459$; $p<0,001$), and use of information ($r=-0,527$; $p<0,001$) is associated with younger respondents age. Lower education levels are associated with better assessments of living and well-being ($r=-0,275$; $p<0,001$), safety ($r=-0,171$; $p=0,006$), and healthcare professionals ($r=-0,246$; $p<0,001$). Those living in less populated areas have better assessments of patient-centered care ($r=0,240$; $p=0,003$), living and well-being ($r=0,181$; $p=0,026$), and healthcare professionals ($r=0,273$; $p=0,001$). Fewer people in the ward are associated with better assessments of living and well-being ($r=-0,224$; $p=0,018$). Nurses with less working experience is associated with better assessments of learning and quality improvement ($r=-0,215$; $p=0,031$) and leadership ($r=-0,218$; $p=0,028$).

Conclusions

Younger patients, their relatives, and nurses provide better evaluations of patient-centered care, safety, leadership, and use of information. Lower education levels are associated with better assessments of life and well-being, safety, and healthcare professionals. Those living in less populated areas give higher ratings for patient-centered care, living and well-being, and healthcare professionals. A smaller number of people in the ward improves the assessment of living and well-being. Nurses with less working experience more positively assessed the learning, quality improvement and leadership.

Knowledge of Nurses and Adolescents with Diabetes about the Use of Insulin Pumps

Poster

Ms. Virginija Bulikaite¹, Dr. Jurgita Gulbiniene¹

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Objectives*

To assess the knowledge of nurses and adolescents with diabetes about the use of insulin pumps.

Materials and Methods

40 nurses and 80 diabetic adolescents aged 14-19 years completed anonymous questionnaires. Statistical analysis of the data was performed using descriptive statistics, frequencies analysis, non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U test) for two samples, t-test for two independent samples, and Chi-square (χ^2) value.

Results

Nurses and adolescents with diabetes answered questions about the technical characteristics of the insulin pumps used in Lithuania, insulin dosing, the choice of insulin injection site, and the advantages and disadvantages of insulin pumps. The knowledge of nurses and adolescents with diabetes about the use of insulin pumps was quite similar, but nurses were much more likely to want to update their knowledge than adolescents ($p < 0.05$). Nurses wanted to update their knowledge every 6 months, whereas adolescents wanted to update their knowledge every 12 months or less. 75% of nurses and 77.5% of adolescents knew that the catheter should be changed every 3 days and the insulin reservoir should be changed at least once a week. Nurses and adolescents with diabetes reported the same disadvantages of the insulin pump. Problems with catheters and the resulting increase in glycaemia were the most frequently mentioned. Some adolescents refuse to use an insulin pump because it can be seen by other people. Although nurses and adolescents differed in their assessment of the advantages of the insulin pump, most mentioned the reduced risk of hypoglycaemia.

Conclusions

Most nurses and adolescents with diabetes thought that the insulin pump helps to manage diabetes better, but most adolescents did not feel that using the device encourages more interest in the disease and health care.

Latvian Society Social Perceptions about Men as Nurses

Poster

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Objectives*

Nurse shortages are continuing to grow worldwide. One of the options to solve this issue is to invite men to study and work in the nursing field.

The purpose of this study was to investigate social representations of Latvian society about men in nursing and to investigate if social representations differ between sociodemographic groups.

Materials and Methods

Non-experimental cross-sectional study completed. The author's survey was used, which included questions about social demographic characteristics and representations of nursing, as well as basic knowledge about nurses and nurses' job. Quantitative data was processed by using Kruskal Wallistest and Mann-Whitney test, as well as describing statistics methods were used. Qualitative data was processed in a manual manner through word grouping method

Results

Study was conducted from December 2023 to March 2024. 419 randomly selected respondents participated in the research.

Latvian society associates male nurses with such qualities as physical strength; professionalism and professional qualities, empathy and care. Respondents also

emphasized the incorrect name for profession representative who is a male. Latvian residents continue to use old terminology or perceive them as doctors, paramedics and nurse assistants.

Respondents also emphasized the rarity of male nurses in Latvia and that interaction with

them could be a completely new experience. In general, social representations of men in

nursing are positive. Social representations of male nurses do not differ significantly between sociodemographic groups. Respondents, whose education is related to health care perceived male nurses more positively than other groups.

Conclusions

The research shows that Latvian society associate male nurses with physical strength, professionalism and knowledge. However, Latvian residents put a stress on male nurse rarity, continue to call nurses as "medical brothers", which is old terminology, and agree with the statement, that existing profession name negatively influence males' choice to study and work as nurses.

Midwives' Experience of Patient and their Relatives Violence in the Maternity Ward

Poster

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Objectives*

To find out the midwives' experience of patient and their relatives violence in the maternity ward.

Materials and Methods

A qualitative design study was used to conduct the research. The study used an instrument created by the author of the study - an interview with 11 semi-structured questions. The study included 12 midwives from different maternity wards in Latvia.

Results

The results revealed that violence from patients and their relatives can manifest in different ways, including psychological, emotional, verbal and physical violence. Midwives in the maternity ward experience violence from patients and their relatives, regardless of age, education and work experience, however, midwives have different experiences in relation to situations, perpetrators of violence and the frequency of violence experienced. Violence against midwives in the maternity ward from patients and their relatives is manifested by aggression, insults, threats, showing superiority, ignoring rules, humiliation, questioning professional skills and knowledge, complaints and unfounded insults on social networks, as well as verbal abuse. Midwives who experience violence may experience professional burnout, increased stress and anxiety, which can negatively affect midwives' self-esteem, job satisfaction and quality of work.

Conclusions

In this study, for the first time in Latvia, midwives' experience of violence from patients and their relatives in the maternity ward was found out, which can help to understand the experience of violence among midwives in the maternity ward, as well as clarify the impact of violence on their mental and physical health and the quality of healthcare. Violence against midwives in the maternity ward is a serious problem that can significantly affect the safety and health of both midwives and patients.

Patients' Experiences after Lower Limb Amputation: Qualitative Research

Poster

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Objectives*

To reveal patients' experiences after lower limb amputation focusing on their psychological, physical, and social challenges and adaptations.

Materials and Methods

A qualitative research methodology was utilized. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with 15 patients aged 45-75 years undergoing rehabilitation at the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department. Participants had undergone their first prosthetic fitting following a unilateral lower limb amputation.

Results

Before the amputation, patients were insufficiently informed about their chronic diseases and complications, despite undergoing vascular surgeries and suffering from circulatory disorders, non-healing wounds, gangrene, and severe pain. Emotional states prior to the procedure ranged from joy and relief to anxiety, anger, and unwillingness to live. Post-amputation, patients faced significant challenges, including phantom and postoperative pain, complex wound healing, restricted mobility, and physical dependence. They sought to regain lost independence but faced difficulties using prosthetics, wheelchairs, and performing daily activities like cooking and dressing. Environmental barriers such as inaccessible inpatient facilities, high thresholds, stairs, and small public spaces further hindered recovery. Socially, patients experienced stigmatization, a reduced circle of friends, and societal exclusion. However, emotional, and physical support from family and friends was critical. A lack of respectful communication and empathy from medical staff was noted, particularly in hospitals and rehabilitation settings.

Conclusions

Lower limb amputation profoundly impacts patients' lives. Effective rehabilitation strategies must address not only physical recovery but also psychological and social reintegration. Increased emphasis on emotional support and adaptive infrastructure is vital to improving patients' quality of life

Readiness of Relatives to Care for a Patient at Home after a Stroke

Poster

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Objectives*

Stroke, or cerebral hemorrhage, profoundly impacts patients and their families, with family members playing a vital role in providing emotional and physical support to aid recovery, manage impairments, and enhance the patient's quality of life. The aim of the study is to find out the willingness of relatives to care for the patient at home after a stroke.

Materials and Methods

Quantitative non-experimental cross-sectional comparative study. Questionnaire on respondents' demographic data and PATH's survey -“Readiness to assess transfer home after stroke, questionnaire”. Descriptive statistics include absolute frequency (age, education level); characteristics (age, minimum/maximum values, arithmetic mean, standard deviation) and data fit to a normal distribution was assessed by the Shapiro-Wilk test. Also Kruskal-Wallis test was used to compare the by age groups. Results 95% confidence intervals were chosen for the calculations and the results were assumed to be statistically different if the p-value is less than 0.05(p<0.05).

Results

Data was collected and received from respondents during the period from December 20 2023 to April 18 2024 through an online survey questionnaire. 163 respondents participated in the study.. Statistically significant differences in care readiness were found in age groups such as 53-69 and 36-52 years, H=8.39 and p=0.04 (norm p<0.05). The willingness to care in the age group from 36 to 52 years was the highest compared to other age groups.

Conclusions

The analysis showed that more than half of the relatives did not score 64 out of 100, indicating that they were not sufficiently prepared for care. The preparedness of patients for home care after cerebral hemorrhage is shaped by various factors, with key influences including stress, financial circumstances, personal health issues, and challenges related to attitudes, relationships, and living conditions

Students Adherence on Nutrition as a Risk Factor for Cardiovascular Diseases

Poster

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Objectives*

to determine the adherence of students of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences of the Nursing Faculty about the Mediterranean diet.

Materials and Methods

This quantitative survey research collected data from 107 students enrolled in the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. The “Mediterranean Diet Knowledge/Adherence Questionnaire” questionnaire was used in survey.

Results

A significant difference was noticed between Lithuanian and International students, indicating a higher level of adherence of the Mediterranean diet among the International students. No significant difference was observed based on religion and gender, but a significant medium correlation was noticed between age and diet adherence. Nursing students were observed to have a higher mean score in knowledge in comparison to physiotherapy and occupational therapy students.

Conclusions

Students do not consume enough vegetables, olive oil, fish and nuts than recommended. More than half of the students consume sweets and red meat than recommended. A weak correlation was noticed between Mediterranean diet knowledge and its adherence among the participants.

Human Biomonitoring – Unlocking Exposure Risks

Evaluation of ncRNAs Expression Levels in the Lung after Environmental Exposure to Fluoro-Edenite Fibers

Poster

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Objectives*

Experimental evidence has shown that environmental exposure to the fibrous amphibole fluoro-edenite (FE) develops chronic respiratory diseases and causes carcinogenic effects. This silicate has some characteristics similar to the asbestos group and scientific evidence has led to the classification of FE fibers as Group 1, or carcinogenic to humans. Furthermore, exposure to FE fibers is causally related to the onset of malignant mesothelioma, but this is not established for lung cancer. Most aspects, in fact, remain unknown.

Lung cancer is currently the second cause of cancer worldwide, with over 1.7 million deaths per year. Many studies have now demonstrated the role of epigenetics in the development and progression of various pathologies, including cancer.

Materials and Methods

On this basis, the aim of this study was to evaluate the expression levels of non-coding RNAs (ncRNAs), in particular microRNAs and transferRNAs, in order to identify a panel potentially involved in the development and progression of lung cancer and to evaluate the pro-tumor epigenetic modulation induced by exposure to FE fibers. In this regard, *in vitro* functional experiments were performed on the lung cell line (HBEC3-KT) and on the lung cancer cell line (A549) after exposure to FE fibers. The same unexposed cell lines were used as controls.

Results

The analysis of the results allowed to identify ncRNAs strictly involved in lung cancer also differentiating exposure to FE fibers. Furthermore, once the differentially expressed ncRNAs were identified for each comparison, the impact of their dysregulation in metabolic and signaling pathways was also evaluated.

Conclusions

The data obtained *in vitro* could be validated on a subset of subjects (workers and non-workers) exposed to FE fibers to verify the clinical role of these ncRNAs and their potential use as biomarkers of exposure and/or pathology.

Mapping Pesticide Exposure: Geospatial Approach Combining Open-Source and Restricted Environmental Datasets

Poster

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Objectives*

The integration of open-source and restricted-access environmental datasets is pivotal in advancing human biomonitoring research. This study explores how diverse data sources such as agricultural land use, protected natural areas, and forestry records can be used to gain information about environmental exposure route of pesticides.

Materials and Methods

The study utilized environmental datasets from sources like the Rural Support Service - information on agricultural field size and grown culture; Nature Conservation Agency of Republic of Latvia, information on special areas of conservation, microbarrings and trees which meet the criteria for conservation (width, height) and specific flora and fauna, therefore requiring protection and Forest State Register providing information on forest size and type. Open-access data, including digitalized maps and QGIS tools, facilitated the geographic analysis of high-exposure areas (<250m from agricultural lands). Meanwhile, restricted datasets contributed crucial insights into pesticide application zones and protected habitats.

Results

The aggregated data offers precise geospatial insights for analyzing the environmental impact on human exposure to pesticides. Data preparation encompassed the total area for each source, and the proximity analysis revealed the distance between the nearest data source point and the surveyed unit's location. This data was combined with results of urine sample analysis to explore the topic of environment as an exposure source to pesticides in Latvian citizens.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates the efficacy of using multi-source geospatial data to enhance understanding of human exposure to pesticides. This work underscores the importance of integrating open-source and proprietary environmental datasets in public health research and advocates for expanding access to improve the accuracy and scope of human biomonitoring.

This research was funded by the National Research Programme of Latvia within the project “Development of Human Biomonitoring Programme for Latvia (HBM4LV)” (agreement number VPP-VM-Sabiedrības_Ķselība-2023/4-0001).

Physical Fitness Input to Antioxidative System Ability

Poster

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Objectives*

Physical training has systemic health-promoting effects and favour physical fitness. High physical and psycho-emotional load contribute to the increased formation of reactive oxygen species and cell damage. Antioxidative system refers to ability of body to neutralized or counteract the harmful effects of free radicals, that damage cells and contribute to various health issues. Aim of the study was characterized physical fitness input to antioxidative system capacity changes under the physical load in multi factorial stressor environment and relative energy deficit in group of healthy persons.

Materials and Methods

The study group included 75 persons (8 females and 67 males) aged from 22 till 34 years. The parameters of anti-oxidative system markers: superoxide dismutase activity, total antioxidants capacity, oxidized and reduced glutathione; 8-hydroxy 2 deoxy guanosine; Malondialdehyde, Hydrogen Peroxide; and Myoglobin, - were measured in the before and after physical load. Physical fitness of participants assessed (in balls) according standardized physical tests results in three physical exercises cross-country race, push up and sit up.

Results

Statistical analyses of markers' correlation and physical fitness level before and after high physical load revealed negative correlation between physical fitness level and concentration of Hydrogen Peroxide ($r=-0,26$, $p<0,05$), between physical fitness level and Total Antioxidant Capacity ($r=-0,30$, $p<0,05$), between physical fitness level and oxidized glutathione ($r=0,49$, $p<0,01$), and reduced glutathione ($r=-0,33$, $p<0,01$). Positive correlation is determined between physical fitness level and myoglobin concentration ($r=0,24$, $p<0,05$).

Conclusions

The analysis of the dynamic of antioxidative system parameters given evidence to adequate adaptation to physical load. There was no fixed increasing of oxidants level during high physical load in multi stressor environment as well no any signs of DNA oxidative damage. The participants were previously trained, and regular physical exercises potentially induced adaptations for oxidative stress and upregulation of the antioxidant system

Proximity of place of residence to Agricultural and Natural Areas as factors of Pesticide Detection in Latvian Population

Poster

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Objectives*

One of pesticide exposure routes is from the environment. This study aimed to assess environmental factors contributing to pesticide exposure in the general population of Latvia. Specifically, it investigated the relationship between urinary pesticide counts and proximity to environmental features such as agricultural areas, wetlands, and forests.

Materials and Methods

This study used the data from the SPECIMEn study with data on pesticide and their metabolite count in urine samples. This data was combined with environmental data from open-source and restricted access datasets with data from the Rural Support Service, Nature Conservation Agency of Republic of Latvia, Forest State Register and open-access data from digitalized maps and QGIS tools.

A generalized negative binomial mixed-effects model was fitted to investigate the association between pesticide count in urine, distances to agricultural areas, wetlands, and forests (inverse-transformed), and age category, accounting for clustering within families through random intercepts

Results

The analysis revealed no statistically significant associations between urinary pesticide counts and proximity to agricultural areas ($\beta = -0.35$, SE = 0.45, $p = 0.434$), wetlands ($\beta = -4.97$, SE = 44.89, $p = 0.912$), or forests ($\beta = 1.85$, SE = 1.92, $p = 0.337$). However, adults exhibited significantly lower urinary pesticide counts compared to children ($\beta = -0.17$, SE = 0.08, $p = 0.029$).

Conclusions

While proximity to environmental features such as agricultural areas, wetlands, and forests was not associated with urinary pesticide counts, age emerged as a significant factor. Children may experience higher pesticide exposure levels than adults, highlighting the need for further investigation into age-specific exposure pathways and protective measures.

Funding: This research is funded by the National Research Programme of Latvia within the project “Development of Human Biomonitoring Programme for Latvia (HBM4LV)” (agreement number VPP-VM-Sabiedrības_Ķselība-2023/4-0001).

Risk of Pneumoconiosis in Workers Exposed to Dust from Volcanic Rocks of Etna

Poster

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Objectives*

Pneumoconiosis is a group of lung diseases result from the inhalation of dust such as crystalline silica (CSL). The aim of the study was to identify cases of pneumoconiosis induced by occupational exposure to lava stone, through analysis of Regional Referral Centre for Rare Lung Diseases (RRCRLD), University of Catania and from health surveillance of workers exposed to CSL.

Materials and Methods

A retrospective observational study was conducted by consulting database of RRCRLD, during: 2012-2022. Data from health surveillance of 3 cohorts of workers exposed to CSL from the processing of volcanic stone material operating in the Etna area are reported: 1) construction workers (CW); 2) lava stone cutters (LSW); 1) quarries workers (QW).

Tests were performed for each subject: medical examination, spirometry, X-ray examination, alveolar-capillary diffusion of CO and chest CT.

Exposure assessment for respirable dust and CLS, was performed.

Results

On a total of 10,497 (100%) patients managed from RRCRLD in the period 2012-2022, n=35 (0.33%) patients had a clear occupational dust exposure and had developed pneumoconiosis. Lava stone processing was present: 3 (9%) CW and 2 (6%) QW.

200 occupational workers exposed to CSL were studied in the period 2012-2022: n=110 (55%) were CW; n=56 (28%) were LSW; n=34 (17%) were QW. Instrumental investigations showed an average respiratory function always within the normal range. First level diagnostic imaging investigations were always within the normal range. CLS exposure measurement data were collected. The data obtained were always below the limit values established by European legislation (0.1 mg/m³ CLS and 3 mg/m³ respirable dust).

Conclusions

Data obtained from this study seem to confirm a low exposure of the operators who work the lava stone of Etna to CLS. This data is demonstrated by the results of the RRCRLD and by the investigation conducted directly with the monitoring of the workers.

Similarities and Differences between Fatigue and Drowsiness

Poster

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Objectives*

In addressing the issue of human fatigue and decreased work capacity with the aim of reducing accident rates in specific application areas, uncertainties arise regarding fatigue and sleepiness, and whether they are identical. If not, which one should be prioritized in solving the main objective of developing a monitoring system for determining the severity of these states?

Materials and Methods

The relationship between fatigue and sleepiness was investigated using topological modeling (TM) of complex functioning systems in the form of directed graphs, developed at Riga Technical University for computerized diagnostics tasks. The TM is a directed graph consisting of vertices and directed edges. The vertices represent functional parameters, while the edges represent cause-effect relationships between them. By applying graph theory, paths between measurable parameters and the main or code vertices of the studied states were identified. The model calculations and analysis concluded with decision-making regarding which state—fatigue or sleepiness—to focus on for developing a monitoring system.

Results

The study demonstrates that fatigue parameters are related to energy imbalance, while sleepiness parameters are related to changes in the nervous system. The sets of parameters causing fatigue and sleepiness are distinct. Sleepiness can depend on fatigue, but not vice versa. The set of causes for sleepiness includes fatigue, but the set of causes for fatigue does not include sleepiness.

Conclusions

Fatigue and sleepiness are not identical concepts. Sleepiness is more dangerous than fatigue, and its measurable parameters are easier to determine, especially the extreme state of falling asleep. Fatigue does not have a distinct extreme state. The study results have enabled the development of a monitoring system that not only determines the level of sleepiness during work but also prevents falling asleep with a proactive alert system.

Topological Model of Human Fatigue and Drowsiness

Poster

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Objectives*

Severe fatigue or drowsiness leads to poor work quality and, in many professions, can result in fatal outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial to develop monitoring systems for these states. The aim of this study is to create an informative and easily measurable set of parameters for monitoring these conditions.

Materials and Methods

The study employs topological modeling (TM) of complex functioning heterogeneous systems, developed at Riga Technical University, for the diagnosis and recovery of technical and biological systems. In biology and medicine, TM began with the modeling of disease pathogenesis. The model is constructed as a directed graph consisting of cause-effect chains that represent processes occurring in the organism. The vertices of the model are the parameters of the process under study, and the directed edges reflect the impact of one parameter on another. The cause-effect chains start with the triggering factor and end with the output parameter. Knowledge about the process under study is organized into three levels: causes or triggering factors, the resulting changes in organism functions, and the manifestations of these changes—symptoms. The model is created by a group of experts.

Results

A topological model of the mental component of human fatigue and the development of drowsiness has been created. The model consists of 69 vertices and 74 edges, which are assigned numerical values by a group of experts with an appropriate concordance or consensus coefficient. The formalized TM processing was performed using graph theory. As a result, a set of parameters for determining fatigue and drowsiness was selected.

Conclusions

The analysis of TM cause-effect chains allows us to conclude that mental fatigue and drowsiness are distinct concepts. The formalized methodology for selecting measurable parameters ensures that only informative and easily obtainable parameters are included in the set.

Indoor Air Quality as an Indicator of Well-Being

Health Inequalities in EU Just Transition Process: Case of Ida-Viru County in North-Eastern Estonia

Oral

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Objectives*

Fossil fuel industries impose environmental and health burdens on dependent regions. The European Green Deal's Just Transition process aims to mitigate these impacts and promote green technologies. However, the accompanying transition process may threaten the socio-economic well-being of local communities. This study explores the current situation and future scenarios in Ida-Viru County, North-Eastern Estonia.

Materials and Methods

We conducted epidemiological studies in Ida-Viru County using health registry and survey data, alongside interviews with stakeholders. Additionally, health inequalities in Just Transition Territories across the EU were mapped.

Results

Epidemiological findings reveal significant health disparities in Ida-Viru County across all age groups. Adverse birth outcomes, such as low birth weight and preterm birth, are more common among mothers exposed to air pollution, especially Russian-speaking residents. Schoolchildren exhibit higher asthma prevalence and elevated FeNO levels. Adults face increased risks of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, as well as lung cancer among males, contributing to 4–5 years shorter life expectancy compared to capital area. Income levels in the region are also significantly lower. Similar patterns of lower life expectancy and income are observed in Just Transition Territories across Europe.

The qualitative analysis highlights lower healthcare service quality and insufficient preventive measures in Ida-Viru County. Systemic challenges, including socio-economic, educational, and health disparities, compounded by cultural norms, undermine the region's ability to adapt to the high-carbon industry's phase-out. Weak civil society organizations and fragile administrative systems risk worsening social inequalities and deteriorating residents' physical and mental health.

Conclusions

Successfully adapting to the transition demands more than simply redirecting employees and employers. It requires targeted interventions that strengthen industries, energy systems, health services, and overall well-being frameworks. Future research on just transitions should examine the combined effects of environmental changes and social inequalities on the health and well-being of residents across their life spans.

Information and Communication Technologies Integration in Social Work

Enhancing Emotional Well-Being and Social Connectivity in Home Care: Evaluating the Impact of a Video Visit Service

Oral

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Objectives*

Video visit service provides remote monitoring and daily communication with elderly who receive home care with the aim of providing persons with the opportunity to maintain as independent lifestyle as possible and prevent deterioration of a person's emotional state. The primary objective of the study was to evaluate the impact of the Video Visit service on clients social functioning and psycho-emotional state, reduction of loneliness and improvement of their self-care abilities.

Materials and Methods

The mixed-methods research was conducted over 12 months, with four stages of evaluation. Data collection included:

1. **Quantitative assessment** using the DASS-21 (Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scales).
2. **Semi-structured interviews** with clients and care providers.
3. **Observational assessments** of clients' environment and daily routines.
4. **Expert interviews** to evaluate service implementation and future potential.

Results

The study revealed positive psycho-emotional improvements among clients using the Video Visit service, with notable reductions in anxiety and depression levels, while stress levels remained stable. The service also provided substantial social benefits, facilitating socialization and offering emotional support. Additionally, it served as a practical tool for reminders, such as medication adherence. The service was particularly suitable for individuals with mild dementia or those living alone, with rapport typically established within two weeks. However, challenges were noted, as the service showed no measurable impact on reducing home care tasks. Some clients also expressed dissatisfaction with the content of conversations and inconsistencies in service delivery.

Conclusions

The Video Visit service offers promising potential as a remote care tool, especially for enhancing clients' psycho-emotional well-being and social connectivity. However, its integration into broader care routines requires clearer eligibility criteria, flexible regulation, and consistent implementation to maximize benefits. Further long-term studies are needed to validate its impact on reducing the workload of home care providers.

Digital Communication in Provision of Social Services in Latvian Municipalities

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

The provision of social services is an autonomous function of Latvian municipalities. Communication in social work practice is essential both within organizations and in external interactions with service recipients, inter-institutional cooperation, and community engagement. Digital technologies enhance this communication but require new skills and approaches. The study aims to analyze the role of digital technologies in Latvian municipalities in the provision of social services and the promotion of public participation.

Materials and Methods

The methodology is based on the analysis of multiple sources, including E-index data (2019, 2021, 2022, The Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia), which evaluates the digital maturity level of state institutions and municipalities. Additional sources include “Development of Professional Social Work in Municipalities: Ex-Post Study” (2023), “Latvia 2024 Digital Decade Country Report,” the “Tietoevry” and “Norstat” report (2023), and an analysis of the official websites of municipal social services.

Results

In 2019, 50% of municipalities used electronic platforms for internal communication, with 43 reaching the first and 58 the second level of digital maturity. By 2021, 40% used knowledge management tools, while 31% noted their need; most municipalities reached levels 1–3 of digital maturity. By 2022, most had achieved levels 2–4. Improvements focused on specific target groups, such as persons with special needs (42%) and seniors (31%). The “Tietoevry” and “Norstat” study found 52% of residents emphasized the need to enhance digital solutions.

Conclusions

The E-index reveals that the development of digital technologies in Latvian municipalities is uneven, reflecting varying levels of access to services depending on the municipality. To improve the situation, it is crucial to enhance not only the digital skills of employees and service recipients but also the functionality of local municipal websites, to improve and facilitate two-way communication with society.

Innovative Approaches in Education of Future Social Workers in Higher Education

Poster

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1. Catholic University in Ružomberok

Objectives*

The main objective of this article is to advance educational frameworks for the preparation of future social workers through the integration of innovative methodologies and the creation of ULCA, an international network of innovative teachers and educational organizations. This initiative aims to transform higher education institutions into modern learning environments through the development of specialized courses that address complex educational needs in the field of social work. Through this network, we aim to cultivate a community of educators, administrators, and institutional leaders who are dedicated to improving the organizational culture within higher education through innovative pedagogical approaches that will lead to greater professionalization of social work and easier identification of social work students with the status of social worker.

Materials and Methods

Implementation:

This article presents the first outputs of the Creating the Network of Excellent ULCA Schools project oriented towards the creation of an interactive online tool tailored for educators and university representatives. Key activities include the development of web-based courses, engagement with academic leaders and administrators at universities through comprehensive management guidelines, vision-building workshops, EFQM-based training for excellence in education, and blended learning modules focused on digital literacy and creative teaching methodologies. In addition, the implementation of ULCA's teacher monitoring processes will be key to improving teaching outcomes. In this article, we do not focus on the quality control of social work-oriented work and learning processes, as is the case with most educational quality assessment systems, but on the self-development of academics through peer observation of other members of the academic team.

Results

Expected outcomes include the establishment of the ULCA International Association, the development of new digital and blended learning courses designed specifically for social work education, and the development of guidelines for the management of academic institutions. Other significant outcomes will include the introduction of an e-learning platform, the launch of the project and association websites, and the operationalization of ULCA's teacher monitoring processes to ensure continuous improvement of teaching practices.

Conclusions

Keywords:

Social work. Education. Professionalisation. Social worker. The role of the social worker. Innovation.

OECD Knowledge and Skills Research: Contribution to Promoting Social Well-being

Poster

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Objectives*

The objective of this presentation is to present the methodology and some results of OECD researches conducted in Latvia (PIAAC and PISA), which provide insights into the levels of knowledge, information acquisition, and skills within the population, including the adoption of new technologies and the application of these competencies. The presentation will emphasize the importance of these studies for Latvia's overall development and the enhancement of social well-being in society.

Materials and Methods

Latvia has access to the research tools offered by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). The results from the OECD's PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), which surveyed 5,373 15-year-old students, and the OECD's PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies), which surveyed 6,544 respondents aged 16 to 65, are either available or will be available soon.

Results

The PIAAC study provides valuable information on the Latvian population's abilities in text comprehension, numeracy, adaptive problem-solving, critical analysis, and the use of intellectual potential in unfamiliar or complex information environments.

The PISA study results reflect students' proficiency in mathematics, natural sciences, and reading literacy. These results focus on how well students can apply their acquired knowledge and skills to find optimal solutions in various areas of life.

Conclusions

The results from the OECD studies (PIAAC and PISA) offer insights into the potential for predicting the population's competencies, their ability to adopt new technologies, and future demand for various levels of education. The application of these insights will help foster the development of human capital, support key sectors of the Latvian economy, and enhance social well-being. In doing so, it will contribute to reducing social inequality and eliminating exclusion.

Key words: knowledge, competencies, social welfare, social development

Technological Dimension of Social Work Practice: Opportunities and Challenges

Poster

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Objectives*

To identify key trends, advantages, challenges, and ethical issues associated with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) adoption in social work, including work with the elderly, training of specialist, and digital inclusion.

Materials and Methods

The literature review was planned and conducted following PRISMA (Preferred reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines for systematic reviews. To achieve the research aim, a targeted literature search was conducted in the EBSCO and ScienceDirect databases from February to September 2024. Articles were selected for analysis using criteria: 1) the scientific article was published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal, 2) full text article in English, 3) due period – article published in 2014-2024, 4) the research topic analysed in the articles. The research emphasized qualitative synthesis to analyse ICT's role in social work, evaluating service delivery, competency development, and ethical dilemmas.

Results

The results indicate that ICT integration improves communication, accessibility, and the efficiency of service delivery. ICT tools, such as chatbots and digital platforms, provide innovative solutions for delivering social services. However, several challenges remain, including resistance to technological changes, digital divide issues, and ethical concerns related to data privacy and confidentiality.

Conclusions

ICT integration into social work offers transformative opportunities that enhance service delivery and professional development. However, it is essential to address emerging ethical challenges and ensure equal access to digital tools. Future research and policy directions should prioritize digital inclusion and ethical frameworks to maximize ICT's potential in social work.

Innovative Approach to Care, Including Technology Solutions

Breastfeeding Problems and Telemedicine for Support

Oral

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Objectives*

The purpose of the study “Breastfeeding Problems and Telemedicine Support” is to identify the breastfeeding problems faced by women after vaginal and caesarean deliveries and to assess the support provided by telemedicine.

Timely and individualized information can reduce breastfeeding-related problems. Successful breastfeeding requires quality support from staff in maternity facilities, particularly in the early postpartum period (Lojander et al., 2024). Telemedicine services offer a solution to breastfeeding issues by providing personalized video or audio consultations, enabling remote healthcare through technology, and delivering lactation services to breastfeeding mothers. (Hamid et al., 2022).

To identify the breastfeeding problems encountered by women and the use of telemedicine support, a quantitative, non-experimental, comparative cross-sectional study was conducted. The study involved a survey using a structured questionnaire developed by the author. The collected data was analysed using descriptive and comparative statistical methods.

Out of 682 respondents, 87.4% (N=596) experienced breastfeeding problems. Specifically, 87.0% (N=428) after vaginal delivery and 88.4% (N=168) after caesarean delivery. The three most common breastfeeding problems identified were pain (43.5%, N=297), cracked nipples (41.5%, N=283), and improper latching by the infant (35%, N=238). A total of 94.13% (N=642) sought advice or help regarding breastfeeding. Only 10.6% (N=72) used remote consultations exclusively, while 17.6% (N=120) used both in-person and telemedicine consultations, indicating that 28.2% (N=192) of all respondents used telemedicine to address breastfeeding problems.

The majority of women face breastfeeding problems, more frequently among those who had caesarean deliveries. Although more than half of the women use telemedicine for various medical services, remote consultations for breastfeeding issues are relatively rare.

External Cephalic Version for Breech Presentation at Riga Maternity Hospital: Five-Year Review

Poster

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Objectives*

External cephalic version (ECV) is an alternative to caesarean section (CS) for fetal malpresentation. This study aims to present our clinical experience with the ECV procedure.

Materials and Methods

This case-control study involved the performance of ECV on 295 pregnant patients at Riga Maternity Hospital from January 2019 to October 2024. Inclusion criteria encompassed singleton gestation, gestational age exceeding 36 weeks and 6 days, absence of uterine contractions, and intact membranes. Logistic regression analysis was employed to assess the relationship between maternal and fetal characteristics and the success of ECV. Data was processed using SPSS software, version 25.0

Results

ECV was successfully performed in 52.2% of cases (nulliparas, N=76; multiparas, N=75), with a mean gestational age of 37 weeks and 3 days. No complications were reported following ECV procedures in this study. The average gestational age for birth in the successful cases was 39 weeks and 3 days, with 69% of these being induced births and 87.2% resulting in vaginal deliveries. The primary reason for acute cesarean section (CS) among patients with successful ECV was uterine dysfunction, occurring in 57% of cases. In the unsuccessful ECV group, the rate of CS was 72.6%, with 52% of these cases classified as elective. Fetal weight emerged as the sole factor significantly impacting the outcome of vaginal birth ($p=0.0118$, OR = 1.718). No serious consequences related to increased maternal or neonatal morbidity or mortality were reported.

Conclusions

External cephalic version represents a viable alternative to cesarean section for addressing fetal malpresentation at term. The overall success rate for ECV was found to be 52.2%. ECV may be considered a more cost-effective option compared to CS and is associated with a reduction in overall cesarean rates. Furthermore, estimated fetal weight is a critical factor influencing the success of vaginal birth.

Impact of Music on Health Outcomes of Post-Myocardial Infarction Patients in the ICU

Poster

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Objectives*

To determine the effects of music on anxiety, stress, pain and physiological parameters in patients after myocardial infarction.

Materials and Methods

The research was carried out in one of the Lithuanian hospitals. The research method is a prospective, quota sample survey. The study included patients who were hospitalized in the ICU under emergency care with a diagnosis of myocardial infarction and coronary angiography. The study included 150 patients and was randomly divided into three groups: Study Group I listened to classical music; Study group II listened to relaxing music; The control group did not listen to music. We used questionnaires: The Brief Resilience Scale; Anxiety scale, Stress scale, Pain Scale and protocol for monitoring physiological parameters and additional questions.

Results

In most patients after myocardial infarction, the psychological resistance to stress before the music issue was normal. Prior to listening to music, high-level anxiety and moderate pain were found in the classical and control groups, and moderate-intensity anxiety and mild pain in the relaxation group. Prior to the study, respondents in all groups felt moderate levels of stress. Anxiety, stress, and pain were significantly reduced in the intervention group after listening to music, and subjects in the control group still experienced high anxiety, moderate stress, and moderate pain at the end of the study. Prior to listening to music, the mean heart rate, systolic, and diastolic blood pressures were similar in all groups of respondents. After listening to music in the intervention groups, mean heart rate, systolic, and diastolic blood pressure decreased significantly. Prior to the study, oxygen saturation was 95% in all groups. After the study oxygen saturation of classical music increased significantly.

Conclusions

Listening to classical and relaxing music helps to reduce pain, anxiety, stress, arterial blood pressure and oxygen saturation felt by patients after myocardial infarction and coronary angiography in ICU.

Moral Distress Among Neonatal and Paediatric Intensive Care Nurses before and during COVID-19: Systematic Review

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

This systematic review explores the prevalence, causes, and impacts of moral distress among NICU and PICU nurses before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim is to identify key contributing factors, analyze their evolution during the pandemic, and propose strategies for mitigation.

Materials and Methods

A systematic review was conducted using PRISMA guidelines, analyzing quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies. Databases including MEDLINE, PubMed, and ProQuest were searched for studies on moral distress from 2015 to 2024. The Moral Distress Scale and related tools were used to measure distress levels. Included studies assessed nurses' experiences in NICU and PICU settings, focusing on ethical dilemmas and organizational factors. Data extraction and quality checks ensured consistency.

Before initiating the literature search, our study protocol was registered to the International Prospective Register of Systematic Reviews database (registration number: CRD42024592661).

Results

The review analyzed 15 pre-pandemic and 8 pandemic-era studies from diverse healthcare systems. Before COVID-19, moral distress stemmed from complex ethical dilemmas, such as end-of-life care and non-beneficial treatments. During the pandemic, distress intensified due to resource shortages, patient-family separation, and infection fears. Organizational support, communication, and professional autonomy were moderating factors. Cross-sectional designs dominated the studies, highlighting self-reported moral distress increases, with over 50% of nurses contemplating leaving the profession.

Conclusions

Moral distress, heightened during the pandemic, reveals the urgent need for systemic interventions. Enhancing team communication, providing psychological support, and fostering ethical resilience are critical. Tailored strategies focusing on resource optimization and nurse involvement in decision-making can mitigate distress and improve both professional well-being and patient care quality.

Measuring and Improving Quality

Adverse Drug Event Detection in Latvian Administrative Data

Poster

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1. University of Latvia

Objectives*

We aimed to investigate whether the actual adverse drug event (ADE) reported passively differs from the ADE in administrative data sources. We assumed the clinically important difference was twofold higher in administrative data compared to the passive ADE report system.

Materials and Methods

Data from the State Medical Agency passive ADE report system for the period from January 1st 2016 to December 31st 2020 was included in the analysis and compared with the data on ADE collected by the Latvian Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDPC). The collected data included only participants who received hospital services at that period. To identify ADE, we primarily used a set of diagnostic codes from the study by *Hohl et al. (2013)* and adapted it to the Latvian administrative data. To identify ADE 375 diagnoses codes were used according to *Hohl et al. (2013)*, and 165 diagnoses codes were used after the proposed adaptation. We calculated the total difference of reports in the two systems to evaluate the quantity of under-reporting.

Results

In total, 15,638 unique person's reports were included in the study. The cases reporting potential ADE from the CDPC database were 8-30 times more frequent than those reported in the passive ADE system by the State Medical Agency. We additionally observed that codes for unspecified allergies were used incorrectly. The adapted coding framework demonstrated the highest alignment with the State Medical Agency data. The study detected general practitioners identifying approximately 40-50% of all potential ADE.

Conclusions

The principles of the correct coding should be discussed with general practitioners to improve the passive ADE reporting systems as they most frequently involved in their detection. Each record of CDPC data should be linked to a specific medication for more objective results and safer medicine use improvement in Latvia.

Assessing Patient Adherence in Physiotherapy

Poster

Ms. Anna Marija Skudra¹

1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of assessing patient adherence in physiotherapy.

Materials and Methods

A critical review approach was adopted to explore methods for assessing patient adherence across various fields. Databases including PubMed, ScienceDirect, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, SpringerLink, and Wiley Online Library were explored. A total of 19 publications were included for thematic analysis, conducted until saturation was achieved. The analysis was guided by the Physiotherapist Profession Standard, which outlines tasks related to patient adherence, such as assessing health and functional status, setting goals, planning treatment, implementing interventions, and promoting health.

Results

Thematic analysis revealed three key themes: adherence parameters, data collection methods, and data types. Adherence parameters included physical (e.g., frequency, duration, intensity), behavioral, and contextual factors. Surveys and interviews emerged as versatile tools for assessing these parameters comprehensively. In contrast, electronic devices and attendance registers provided limited insights, focusing primarily on frequency and duration. Data types were categorized as quantitative, qualitative, or mixed, reflecting the diversity of adherence assessment approaches. Contextual factors, such as patient motivation, environment, and social support, were found to significantly influence adherence.

Conclusions

This study highlights that assessing patient adherence in physiotherapy requires a multifaceted approach, addressing physical, behavioral, and contextual factors. The findings emphasize the importance of using versatile tools, while tailoring methods to specific stages of therapy. By integrating diverse assessment strategies and considering contextual influences, practitioners can enhance adherence evaluation, ultimately improving odds of better patient outcomes and the quality of care.

Management of Healthcare Professionals’ Human Capital: Individual Perspective

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

The “*Latvia’s Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030*” highlights the need for timely investments in healthcare, associated knowledge, and technologies. The “*Public Health Guidelines 2021–2027*” specifies the need to ensure that the skills and knowledge of healthcare professionals align with the development of healthcare services; improve human resource management systems by enhancing data quality and identifying the required workforce and their human capital. The “*Health Workforce Development Strategy 2025–2029*” acknowledges that Latvia’s healthcare sector suffers from decentralised data exchange and resource planning, hindered by limited analytical capacity. This necessitates a centralised, modern data storage and planning tool to track healthcare professionals’ skill and competency development over their careers. This study aims to assess current practices in managing healthcare professionals’ human capital (professional skills) at the individual level and to identify priority areas for improvement in the national healthcare workforce’s human capital management.

Materials and Methods

An express survey was conducted among healthcare professionals from three clinical university hospitals in Latvia using the MS Teams Forms (November–December, 2024).

Results

The survey included 102 respondents from Pauls Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital, Riga East University Hospital, and the Children’s Clinical University Hospital. 98% respondents lacked a skills portfolio documenting competency acquired through education. 94% respondents reported no monitoring of skill acquisition by professional associations or employers. 87% respondents supported the idea of a skills portfolio, citing its potential to support professional development planning, track skill acquisition progress, and facilitate career planning.

Conclusions

To implement a centralised system for managing and analysing human resource and human capital data, an initial system must be developed to collect such data and establish data exchange processes among stakeholders. Educational institutions should ensure the assessment and certification of skills acquired through their programmes, providing learners with individual skill certifications to form a skills portfolio. This approach would enable data accumulation and analysis at individual, institutional, and national levels.

Patterns of Antimicrobial and Antipsychotic Medication Dispensations to Long-term Care Residents in Nova Scotia, Canada

Poster

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Objectives*

To describe patterns of antimicrobial and antipsychotic dispensations to long-term care (LTC) residents and assess factors related to clinical outcomes.

Materials and Methods

Nova Scotia (NS) is a Canadian province of about 1 million residents with 8 % of seniors living in LTC. The Nova Scotia Seniors' Pharmacare Program (NSSPP) provides drug insurance coverage to subscribed beneficiaries aged 65 and older without other insurance.

For antipsychotics, we included persons 66 years and older (April 2009 to March 2017) and for antimicrobials we included women 65 years and older who resided in LTC (January 2005 to March 2020) who had an uncomplicated urinary tract infection (UTI) and an antibiotic dispensation within 5 days of the UTI. Drug dispensations were identified using NSSPP administrative claims data.

NSSPP data were linked to the Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI) Discharge Abstract and NS physician billing data to determine prespecified outcomes. Persons dispensed antipsychotic medications who experienced a fall-related hospitalization were identified. Persons with an uncomplicated UTI who had a hospitalization or ambulatory care visit for a UTI, or additional antibiotics dispensed within 30 days of the UTI were identified.

Patterns of drug use, trends over time, and predictors of clinical outcomes were determined.

Results

Approximately 40% of LTC residents (2637) received at least 1 antipsychotic dispensation each year (risperidone and quetiapine most frequently). Of these beneficiaries, 544 had been hospitalized and discharged following a fall-related hospital admission.

A total of 15,276 uncomplicated UTI events were documented in 7,078 women. Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (26%), nitrofurantoin (26%), and ciprofloxacin (19 %) were most commonly dispensed. Compared to other antibiotics, fluoroquinolones were not associated with a difference in hospital admission.

Conclusions

Educational targets and policy interventions to improve drug use, decrease polypharmacy and minimize antimicrobial resistance need to be identified and implemented.

Quality of Maternal and Neonatal Care during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Italy: Data from Friuli Venezia Giulia Region – IMAGiNE Project

Poster

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Objectives*

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the quality of maternal and neonatal care (QMNC) globally, including in Italy. However, limited studies have explored women’s perspectives on facility-based childbirth during this period. This study presents findings from the IMAGiNE project, which evaluated QMNC in nine maternity hospitals in Friuli Venezia Giulia, Northeast Italy during the pandemic.

Materials and Methods

IMAGiNE is a quality improvement study implementing WHO Standards for maternal and newborn health. Data were collected in two phases: September 2019–December 2021 and April 2022–April 2023, via telephone interviews. A multilingual, validated questionnaire assessed three dimensions: provision of care, experience of care and availability of motivated and competent human and physical resources. COVID-19-specific questions were included from May 2020. Following the first round, action plans of 7 key indicators were developed and implemented to address gaps in breastfeeding support, pain relief, partner presence during childbirth, and health worker communication.

Results

A total of 8,977 women participated (53.6% of eligible respondents). Primiparous women comprised 53.2%, with over half delivering during 2020–2021. Cesarean sections were reported in 20.3% of cases. Significant improvements in QMNC were observed post-interventions, all with $p < 0.001$. Women reporting a very positive birth experience increased from 47.5% to 55%. Key indicators also improved, including breastfeeding support (75.5% to 82.2%), pain relief (50.9% to 53.8%), information on neonatal danger signs (62.1% to 68.2%), and partner presence (45.3% to 80.0%). Privacy was largely respected (96.9%), though 190 cases of abuse were reported (0.7% verbal/emotional, 0.3% physical).

Conclusions

Despite the pandemic’s challenges, the IMAGiNE project demonstrated significant advancements in QMNC indicators, underscoring the effectiveness of targeted quality improvement efforts. Persistent issues such as reducing abuse and ensuring equitable care require attention. Women’s feedback is vital in strengthening health systems during and beyond public health crises. Future publications will assess trends and the impact of ongoing quality improvement measures.

Quality of Maternal and Newborn Care Around Childbirth According to the WHO Standards: Health Workers’ Views from 12 European Countries

Poster

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Objectives*

To document health workers (HWs) views on quality of maternal and newborn care (QMNC) around childbirth.

Materials and Methods

This is a cross-sectional study using data from the IMAGiNE EURO (Improving MATernal Newborn carE in the EURO Region) project from 12 WHO European countries. HWs involved in maternal/neonatal care for at least one year in 2020-2023 answered an online validated WHO Standards-based questionnaire collecting 40 Quality Measures. For each country, a QMNC Index (score 0-400) was calculated as synthetic measure, overall and by domain of care. Multivariable linear regression with robust standard errors was performed to explore country- adjusted differences in the QMNC Index.

Results

Analyzed data from 4143 HWs, including 2500 midwives, reported significant gaps in QMNC. For 39 out of 40 Quality Measures, at least 20% HWs reported “need for improvement”, with large variations across countries. Indicators with high HWs stating “need for improvement” were availability of informed consent job aids (73.8% in Portugal to 93.4% in Norway), and effective training on women/newborns rights (73.7% in Greece to 93.9% in France). Overall, 64.8% respondents declared that HWs numbers were insufficient for appropriate care (66.3% in Portugal to 86.6% in Poland), and 22.4% described staff censorship (16.3% in Germany to 56.7% in Poland). QMNC Index was low in all countries (median: from 210.60 in Poland 277.86 in Norway). In eight countries the domain with significantly lower Index was “Experience of care” (adj-p<0.001). Multivariable model confirmed large QMNC variation by countries. HWs with <10 years of experience, or from public facilities, and midwives rated QMNC with significantly lower scores (p<0.001).

Conclusions

HWs are relevant source for QMNC assessment and monitoring. Tailored actions are needed for improving QMNC, particularly to ensure an adequate number of HWs and job aids, and to prevent negative practices in some cases illegal, such as censorship.

Role of Technology Partnerships in Mitigating Hospital Security Risks: Combined DES Simulation and Expert Survey Study

Poster

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Objectives*

Permanent functionality of medical devices is crucial for hospitals. However, these devices are increasingly connected with the internet and, thus, prone to cyberattacks resulting in risks for patient safety and financial loss. As the number of specialists in this field is limited in most hospitals, technology partnerships with medical technology manufacturers can be a suitable concept for increasing the level of security or limiting damage in the event of a cyberattack.

Materials and Methods

Based on a discrete event simulation (DES) and expert surveys, the effects of security incidents with different degrees of impact on downtime costs, length of stay, staff utilization and lost arrivals in an emergency department of a general hospital were modelled and simulated. The effects of a technology partnership were simulated using what-if scenarios in order to be able to draw conclusions about the benefits by comparing the avoidable damage effects and the investment costs incurred for a technology partnership.

Results

Depending on the scenario, the resulting savings have a range from €245,524 to €315,673 and the cost-benefit ratio from 4 to 5 in a period of 21 days. Non-financial benefit (e.g. shorter lengths of stay or reduction IT resources) can also be achieved.

Conclusions

Our analysis demonstrates that the level of security for hospitals and their medical devices as well as the operational functionality in the event of damage can be increased if such a concept is applied, i.e., patient safety can be increased while costs can be cut.

Simulation-Based Education: Challenges and Solutions within the Scope of Governance and Legal Frameworks

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

The Cabinet Regulation No.617 of the Republic of Latvia, “Regulations on the Competence of Medical Practitioners and Students in Medical Education Programs and the Scope of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge,” mandates that students acquire skills in simulation-based environments, as stipulated by the respective professional standards and included professional qualification requirements. The aim of this research is to develop a governance and organizational model for implementing simulation-based learning practices, based on internationally recognized standards and pilot project results.

Materials and Methods

Research Framework: Cabinet Regulation No.617 of the Republic of Latvia. European Union legal framework. International standards for simulation-based education. Professional standards. Assessment of Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) experience in implementing simulation-based learning. Methods: Analytical and descriptive methods are applied to evaluate the current simulation-based education standards and their compliance with legal requirements. Additionally, methods for the interpretation of legal norms are employed to analyze the regulatory framework and its alignment with international standards.

Results

Latvian professional standards in medicine and healthcare do not specify prioritized skills in simulation-based learning environments. However, international best practices and Latvian regulations outline scenarios where acquiring skills in simulation-based environments is applicable. RSU’s “Medicine” program incorporates a distinct, simulation-based learning phase, ensuring competence acquisition based on identified needs, access to a shared methodological knowledge database, and the availability of technical solutions for skill acquisition, development, and assessment in simulation-based learning environments.

Conclusions

The analysis conducted in this research highlights the compliance of RSU’s practices with international standards and justifies their potential expansion at the national level, establishing a foundation for the development of simulation-based education in the fields of medicine and healthcare in Latvia. To integrate RSU’s practiced approach at the national level, legal reforms are necessary to define simulation-based learning environments as a distinct part of the medical and healthcare education process—a phase between theory and practice, incorporating aspects specific to this field.

Translational Simulation Approach to ALS Competency Development in Regional Hospitals in Latvia

Poster

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1. Medical Education Technology Centre, Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

To evaluate the satisfaction of medical workers with a translational simulation approach for the Advanced Life Support (ALS) competency refreshment course in regional hospitals in Latvia.

Materials and Methods

A 40-minute prerecorded online lecture was developed and delivered to medical workers, followed by a Multiple-Choice Question (MCQ) test. This was followed by a 3.5-hour in-hospital training session, which included familiarization, Q&A, and skill stations covering chest compressions, manual defibrillation, AED use, airway management, needle decompression for tension pneumothorax, intraosseous injection, and the theory about reversible causes of cardiac arrest. The training culminated in four simulation scenarios: two Basic Life Support (BLS) with AED and two ALS resuscitation scenarios with a manual defibrillator and resuscitation bag. Simulations were conducted using Laerdal QCPR Anne full-body simulator, Isimulate simulated patient monitor, Laerdal airway trainer, Limbs and Things chest tube trainer, and other minor equipment from the simulation center. Twelve courses were delivered across three regional hospitals, reaching 120 medical professionals (including 35 doctors, 61 nurses, 13 medical assistants, 7 midwives, and 6 other medical professionals). Following the course, participants completed a course evaluation survey. BLS scenarios were rated with an average score of 4.75 (out of 5), ALS scenarios received an average score of 4.72, equipment was rated 4.74, and the course environment (hospital conference rooms or resuscitation areas) was rated 4.71. At least 43 participants voluntarily expressed a desire to repeat such courses annually at their workplaces through free-text comments.

Results

Workplace-based simulation training was found to be effective for renewing vital practical skills in real-world settings, enhancing medical workers' competencies. The simulation courses also fostered improved team performance, morale, and collaboration among healthcare providers.

Conclusions

The translational simulation model proved beneficial in regional hospital settings, improving ALS outcomes and preparedness. Expanding this approach to additional regional hospitals can enhance healthcare provider ALS readiness across Latvia.

Validation of Latvian Version of Assessment tool “Self-Assessment of Modes Questionnaire”

Poster

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Objectives*

The study aimed to validate the Latvian version of “Self-Assessment of Modes Questionnaire”.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental assessment development design to test the validity and reliability of the translated tool. Participants consisted of 66 practicing OTs, representing different fields of practice. For data gathering electronic survey was used which contained information on the participants' demographics, field of practice and years of experience, self-assessment tool “Self-Assessment of Modes Questionnaire” (Taylor, 2019) and “Self-Efficacy for Therapeutic Mode Use” section of assessment tool “Self-Efficacy for Therapeutic Use of Self” (Yazdani and Tune, 2016). Data were analysed using descriptive (frequencies, median, IQR) and inferential statistics; Kruskal-Wallis H test, Mann-Whitney U test, Spearman's correlation coefficient, Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Results

The “Self-Assessment of Modes Questionnaire” was successfully translated into Latvian following cross-cultural adaptation guidelines (Sousa & Rojjanasrirat, 2011). Key findings include:

- an expert committee confirmed the content validity of the Latvian version;
- the problem-solving mode emerged as the most frequently used, while the collaborative mode was the least common among participants. No significant differences in mode use were observed based on work experience or field of practice;
- three out of the six therapeutic modes demonstrated construct validity among participants with prior knowledge of IRM concepts;
- medium to high agreement was observed for five of the six therapeutic modes among all participants. Higher consistency was noted in responses from those with prior IRM knowledge, reflecting a better understanding of the constructs assessed.

Conclusions

Latvian version of the “Self-Assessment of Modes Questionnaire” is a valid and reliable instrument for assessing therapeutic mode use among OTs. The results underscore the role of prior training in IRM concepts in improving the understanding and consistency of responses. This validated tool holds promise for fostering self-awareness and intentionality in therapeutic interactions within the Latvian OT community.

Multisectoral Collaboration in Health System

Impact of Environmental Noise on Pregnancy Outcomes in Women with Coronavirus Infection

Oral

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Objectives*

This study aims to evaluate the impact of environmental noise exposure on pregnancy outcomes in women infected with coronavirus, focusing on maternal and neonatal health.

Materials and Methods

A cohort of 400 pregnant women diagnosed with coronavirus between April 2020 and April 2023 was analyzed. Environmental noise levels were measured using decibel (dB) monitoring tools, categorizing exposure into low (≤ 50 dB) and high (> 50 dB) noise levels. Pregnancy outcomes, including rates of preterm birth, low birth weight, and postpartum complications, were extracted from medical records. Statistical analysis utilized logistic regression to assess the relationships between high noise exposure and adverse pregnancy outcomes.

Results

The results indicated that women exposed to high environmental noise levels experienced significantly worse pregnancy outcomes. Preterm birth occurred in 30% of high noise exposure cases compared to 15% in the low exposure group (OR 2.2, 95% CI 1.4-3.4, $p < 0.005$). Additionally, low birth weight was found in 28% of infants born to mothers in high noise areas versus 12% in low noise areas (OR 2.4, 95% CI 1.5-3.8, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, postpartum complications, such as hemorrhage, were reported in 22% of high noise exposure patients compared to 10% among those with lower exposure ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions

This study establishes a significant association between high environmental noise levels and adverse pregnancy outcomes in women with coronavirus infection. Increased rates of preterm birth, low birth weight, and postpartum complications were observed among those exposed to elevated noise levels. These findings emphasize the importance of noise reduction strategies, particularly in urban settings during public health crises, to safeguard maternal and fetal health. Future research should investigate the mechanisms by which noise affects pregnancy and broader implications for maternal care.

Impact of Air Pollution on Pregnancy Outcomes in Women with Coronavirus Infection

Poster

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Objectives*

A substantial amount of the global burden of diseases is related to air pollution that may also impact maternal health and consequently pregnancy outcomes. This study aims to investigate the impact of air pollution on pregnancy outcomes in women infected with coronavirus, focusing on maternal health and neonatal complications.

Materials and Methods

A cohort study was conducted involving 500 pregnant women diagnosed with coronavirus between March 2020 and March 2023. Air pollution data, specifically PM_{2.5} levels, were collected from local environmental monitoring stations. Pregnancy outcomes, including preterm birth, low birth weight, and neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) admission, were assessed using medical records. Statistical analysis was performed using logistic regression to determine the association between air pollution exposure and adverse pregnancy outcomes.

Results

The analysis revealed that women exposed to elevated PM_{2.5} levels ($\geq 35 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) had a significantly higher risk of adverse outcomes compared to those with lower exposure (OR 2.3, 95% CI 1.5-3.5). Preterm birth rates were 25% in the high exposure group versus 10% in the low exposure group ($p < 0.01$). Additionally, low birth weight was observed in 30% of infants born to mothers in the high exposure group versus 15% in the low exposure group ($p < 0.05$). NICU admissions were higher among infants from the high exposure group, occurring in 40% of cases compared to 20% in the lower exposure group ($p < 0.01$).

Conclusions

This study highlights a concerning link between air pollution and negative pregnancy outcomes in women with coronavirus infection. Elevated PM_{2.5} levels significantly increase the risks of preterm birth, low birth weight, and NICU admissions. These findings underscore the need for public health interventions to reduce air pollution, particularly during health crises like the coronavirus pandemic, to protect maternal and fetal health.

International Nursing Students' Experiences with Mentors at Clinical Practice

Poster

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1. Lithuanian University of Health Sciences

Objectives*

Purpose of the work: To determine international nursing students' experiences with mentors at clinical practice.

Research questions:

1. What was your communication with mentors?
2. How did you practice your skills with mentors?
3. Did mentors have an impact on your critical thinking development?

Materials and Methods

A qualitative research method was used, and semi-structured interviews were carried out using an originally self-developed questionnaire. This study included 10 international nursing students.

Results

Nursing students found it difficult to communicate with mentors in clinical practice due to language barriers and clarity of communication: most mentors assigned to the international students do not speak fluent English. Students practicing clinical skills with their mentors increases students' confidence and helps them gain more competence in clinical skills; some mentors supervise more than one student it becomes more challenging for the student to learn new skills or perfect what they already know. Most nurses don't apply current theoretical knowledge which makes it hard for the students to apply theoretical knowledge during clinical practice. On the impact of mentors on students' critical thinking, mentors had a role in developing students' critical thinking during clinical practice by engaging them in situations with patients that required critical thinking, where they make decisions and develop positive attitudes towards discipline and profession. On the other hand, lack of enough clinical experience, and patient consent refusal were the main challenges experienced by students in applying critical thinking.

Conclusions

1. Nursing students had challenges communicating with mentors at clinical practice because of the language barrier and clarity of communication.
2. Students practicing clinical skills with their mentors improve students' confidence and helps in become more competent in clinical skills.
3. Mentors played a role in students' critical thinking during clinical practice by involving them in situations with patients who required critical thinking.

Person-Centered Health Services

Acquisition and Use of External Breast Prosthesis – Experience of Persons with External Breast Prosthesis after Mastectomy in Latvia

Poster

Ms. Ance Pasa¹

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Objectives*

Breast malignancy was the most common cancer diagnosed in women in 2022, with surgery being the primary treatment in most cases, including mastectomy. The loss of one or both breasts after mastectomy can negatively impact a woman's quality of life, affecting various aspects, including body image. External breast prostheses serve as an alternative that can improve these aspects.

Aim of the study was to explore the experiences of women in Latvia who had undergone mastectomy and used external breast prostheses, specifically focusing on obtaining and using the prosthesis.

Materials and Methods

Methods: semi-structured individual interviews were conducted. In total, nine women who met the inclusion criteria were interviewed and approached from support associations/organizations such as the oncology patient support association “Dzīvības koks”, and the “VITA” association. Transcription and encoding of the resulting data has were performed using the deductive content analysis method (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

Results

The study found that women chose external breast prostheses to avoid further reconstruction surgery and its consequences, due to their age, lack of information about breast reconstruction options, or because they could not accept their body image without breast. Most participants received prostheses funded by the state, but many were dissatisfied with them. Some women had accepted the prosthesis and were able to adapt to important activities, while others had given up activities such as sunbathing, swimming, and going to the sauna. The study also revealed that relatively few women were informed about specialized clothing, such as swimwear, sports bras, and decorative accessories for the décolletage area.

Conclusions

The study concludes that women with breast cancer should receive information about both the availability and use of breast prostheses during their treatment, so they are better prepared for the changes they may face in daily life.

Association of Alexithymia with Headaches, Nausea and Changes in BMI during Pregnancy

Poster

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Objectives*

Find out the relationship of alexithymia to headaches, nausea and changes in the body mass index in the pregnant population.

Materials and Methods

Data from the study came from anonymous questionnaires in paper and electronic format that pregnant women filled out themselves. The sample of the study was constructed nonmaterially with the method of volunteering and snowballing. The paper questionnaires were delivered to Paula Stradins clinical University hospital, the maternity ward and midwives were asked to share questionnaires among pregnant women. Electronic questionnaires were posted on social networks, forums for pregnant women and mothers-to-be, and pregnant women shared a questionnaire with each other. A total of 100 questionnaires were collected. Descriptive and conclusion statistics were used to describe the findings of the study. The descriptive statistics used - frequency distribution, central tendency indicators - mean arithmetic, median and modal, variance or distribution rates - range, variance and standard deviation, and normality rates - Shapiro-Wilk test. The Chi Square test was used to determine the relationship between the groups. Spearman's correlation test was used to determine whether there was correlation in the data.

Conclusions

According to the study, the prevalence of alexithymia in pregnant women is most prevalent in the 22-31 age group. Alexithymia is most common in the first trimester of pregnancy, where it was found in 11% of pregnant women. The prevalence of headaches was most widespread in the second trimester of pregnancy and affected 26% of pregnant women. 73% of pregnant women experienced nausea, most commonly during the second trimester of pregnancy. 62% of pre-pregnancy women had normal weight (BMI 18.5-24.99).

Design Thinking, Innovation, Communication, and Health: Mapping Personas and User Journeys of the Advanced Translational Center for Obesity Treatment – CATO-USP

Poster

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*Prof. Sílvia Helena de Carvalho Sales Peres*¹

1. USP - University of São Paulo, 2. Unesp - São Paulo State University

Objectives*

Identify informational abundance relating health and obesity through a systematic review and meta-analysis. Evaluate and map personas and user journeys related to access to obesity treatment and develop action proposals for the development of an ideal journey, improving processes, touchpoints, communication channels, among other possible actions, connected to the Advanced Translational Obesity Center - CATO/USP (University Of São Paulo - Brazil)

Materials and Methods

For the development of the work, a systematic review will be conducted on Design Thinking, Personas, User Journey, Misinformation, and Digital Influence, related to the context of obesity and health. The Design Thinking framework, Double Diamond, will also be applied, with the stages of Discovery, Define, Development, and Delivery. In these stages, surveys, in-depth interviews, persona mapping, user journey mapping, and co-creation workshops with patients and service providers from CATO (Advanced Translational Obesity Treatment Center) will be conducted.

After clustering all the findings, solutions, actions, and new processes will be prototyped to improve communication, processes, and operations at CATO, with the goal of creating a greater positive impact on the community.

Results

As expected results, the goal is to improve and expand the impact of CATO's activities in the community, with more assertive communications, more efficient processes, and actions that enhance the user experience in accessing obesity treatment.

In addition, the research demonstrated how design thinking frameworks can contribute to access to information and healthcare services.

Conclusions

Since this is a research project, there are no conclusions to be reported yet. However, what is expected from the publication is to present possible pathways for interdisciplinarity between health, communication, innovation, and design thinking.

In this way, the work can serve as inspiration for other researchers to expand their projects, seeking and creating new connections between fields, as well as generating results that can contribute to various areas of knowledge and to society.

Exploring Spirituality’s Role in Oncology Care: Scoping Review

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

The European Commission’s *Better Life for Cancer Patients* initiative emphasizes improving the quality of life (QoL) for cancer patients, highlighting the importance of integrated psychosocial cancer care (European Commission, 2021). Addressing physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs is crucial, as cancer often challenges patients’ spiritual beliefs and worldview (Casellas-Grau et al., 2021). Despite evidence linking spirituality to QoL improvements in oncology (Bai & Lazenby, 2015), research on spiritual concerns among patients undergoing treatment, survivors, or those facing uncertain prognoses remains limited.

Materials and Methods

This scoping review analyzed 51 quantitative studies (2019–2023) to explore spirituality’s role in supporting oncology patients’ adaptation to illness and life. The research addressed three key questions: (1) What spiritual concepts are studied in this population? (2) How are these concepts measured? (3) What associations do they reveal?

Results

Findings indicate that positive spirituality—expressed through hope, meaning, and connectedness—is associated with better mental health and improved adaptation to cancer and its treatment. Conversely, negative spirituality—characterized by spiritual distress or existential crisis—correlates with poorer health outcomes and maladaptive adjustment. A major barrier in this field is the lack of consensus on defining and measuring spirituality in oncology, complicating research and practice.

Conclusions

The study underscores the critical need for structured spiritual care within cancer treatment protocols. Interventions fostering adaptive coping strategies through spirituality may enhance mental health and overall QoL. Addressing non-adaptive coping mechanisms is essential for holistic oncology care, paving the way for improved patient outcomes and well-being.

Role of Proprioception in Injury Prevention and Functional Mobility

Poster

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Objectives*

Proprioception, often described as the body's sixth sense, is essential for coordinating movement, maintaining balance, and ensuring joint stability. Its significance extends beyond athletic performance, playing a critical role in daily functional mobility and the prevention of injuries. Deficiencies in proprioceptive feedback can compromise neuromuscular control, increasing the likelihood of sprains, strains, and other musculoskeletal injuries.

By exploring the latest research and practical applications, this session aims to highlight the importance of proprioceptive awareness in optimizing movement efficiency and fostering resilience against injuries. The insights provided will offer valuable tools for clinicians, trainers, and practitioners dedicated to improving functional outcomes across diverse populations.

Materials and Methods

This study and discussion focus on the role of proprioception in injury prevention and functional mobility through a combination of literature review, experimental data, and applied case studies.

The following approaches were utilized literature review by comprehensive analysis of peer-reviewed articles, clinical studies, and systematic reviews on proprioception, neuromuscular control, and injury prevention.

Results

Proprioceptive exercises were shown to improve gait dynamics, reduce fall risk in older adults, and accelerate functional recovery in post-injury rehabilitation.

Combining proprioceptive drills with strength and flexibility training yielded the best results in improving over-all mobility.

Conclusions

Proprioception is a cornerstone of injury prevention and functional mobility, with its optimization offering profound benefits across diverse populations. The results underscore the importance of integrating proprioceptive training into routine rehabilitation and athletic programs to improve outcomes and reduce injury risk.

Share My Steps: Application to Assist Mobility of Visually Impaired Individuals through Geolocation and Facilitate their Connections

Poster

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Objectives*

Develop a smartphone application to assist visually impaired individuals in navigating central urban areas and improve the reliability of their actions through connections and communication with their contacts. Develop an interface and functionalities based on ease of use and suitability for different users: visually im-paired and non-disabled individuals.

Materials and Methods

Firstly, a literature review was conducted on the real needs of visually impaired individuals and the contribution of technology. The software process model adopted was prototyping, with functional verification as the units were developed and validation through simulation experiments. Thus, the obtained result was qualitatively analyzed, and if succesful, the product would be made available on the App Store and Play Store. For the development of the API and the back-end, NodeJS was used, and for the database, MySQL with the MySQL Workbench management tool. On the front-end, the project was created in React Native using JavaScript and TypeScript, with the help of Expo for simulation and execution of the application. Additionally, for versioning and code control, Git and GitHub were employed.

Results

A geolocation application was developed, focused on users with visual impairments, featuring functions such as user updating and deletion, and the collection of geolocation with the user's permission, displayed on a map. This location can be sent via SMS to a pre-registered emergency contact number and also allows video calls.

Conclusions

During the research, we identified the lack of mobility applications that address the issue of visual impairment. Therefore, this application was developed with the goal of providing accessibility for this audience, who also needs to locate themselves and securely share their location, while being able to communicate in search of assistance if needed. Thus, we believe that the research can bring positive results and encourage the creation of new accessibility-focused applications that can positively impact society.

Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Disease Prevention

Cervical Cancer Screening Attendance Related Factors among Women in Latvia

Oral

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Objectives*

Latvia has one of the lowest cervical cancer (CC) screening rates in Europe. Identifying subpopulations whose participation does not align with national guidelines could support targeted interventions. This study aimed to identify factors associated with CC screening attendance in Latvia.

Materials and Methods

Data from a cross-sectional study conducted between February 2021 and April 2022 was used including women aged 25–70 years (n=1313) attending 10 selected general practitioner practices or referred to colposcopy clinic for abnormal cervical cytology. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire. Multivariate binary logistic regression was used to identify associated factors, adjusting for demographic variables ($p<0.05$).

Results

Low screening participation (once every four years or less; the reference category – once per three years that fits with the national guidelines) was associated with chronic diseases (OR: 1.73), poor knowledge of screening frequency (OR: 2.07) or method (OR: 4.78), lack of awareness of HPV vaccination (OR: 1.67), and poor healthcare habits, such as a last gynecological visit over three years ago (OR: 7.48).

Over-frequent screening (biannual or more frequent) was linked to smoking (OR: 1.50), moderate/high self-rated STI risk (OR: 1.60), six or more lifetime sexual partners (vs. 0-1 OR: 1.68), and poor knowledge of screening frequency (OR: 2.00) or method (OR: 2.48). Odds were lower for women who had no prior cervical cytology (OR: 0.45), no history of follow-up for abnormal smears (OR: 0.50), and longer intervals since their last gynecological visit (OR: 0.31 for more than three years ago).

Conclusions

Non-adherence to CC screening guidelines - whether under- or over-utilization - is associated with both - health-related behaviors and awareness.

Criterion Validity of Riga Cognitive Screening Task Cognitive Assessment Scale

Oral

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Objectives*

Dementia prevalence is projected to affect 3.28% of the EU-28 population by 2050 (Dementia in Europe Yearbook 2019, 2020). Early detection of cognitive decline is critical for initiating timely treatment and improving quality of life (Burke & Goldfarb, 2023). Cognitive screening is essential for dementia diagnostics, yet many traditional tools lack modern psychometric, neuroscientific, and technological advancements (Umfleet et al., 2023). To address this, the Riga Cognitive Screening Task (RCST) was developed. This study examines the concurrent criterion validity of RCST Cognitive Assessment scale by correlating its cognitive measures with brain atrophy scales.

Materials and Methods

Initial analysis included 25 native Latvian participants aged 56–83 years (Mage = 69.72; 16% male), free of health conditions affecting cognition. The RCST includes 13 tasks assessing memory, language, reasoning, motor function, orientation, visuospatial abilities, and working memory. FAZEKA, global cortical atrophy, and medial temporal atrophy measures were extracted from 3T MRI scans.

Results

Moderate significant correlations were observed. FAZEKA scores correlated with reasoning ($r_s = -.466, p=.019$), while global cortical atrophy was linked to poorer semantic verbal fluency ($r_s = -.440, p=.028$), and reasoning ($r_s = -.405, p=.045$). Left and right medial temporal atrophy correlated with episodic memory ($r_s = -.486, p=.014$ and $r_s = -.464, p=.019$, accordingly), reasoning ($r_s = -.484, p=.014$ and $r_s = -.436, p=.029$, accordingly), and semantic fluency ($r_s = -.532, p=.007$ and $r_s = -.493, p=.012$, accordingly).

Conclusions

Initial findings suggest RCST Cognitive Assessment scale may partially reflect brain atrophy patterns associated with cognitive decline. However, a larger and more heterogeneous sample is required for robust validation and broader applicability.

Funding: the project “RSU internal and RSU with LSPA external consolidation”, No.5.2.1.1.i.0/2/24/I/CFLA/005. Postdoctoral Grant “Development and validation of Riga Cognitive Screening Task (RiTa)”, No. RSU-PG-2024/1-0011

Advancing Prevention for Under-Recognised Diseases: Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia in Focus

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

Myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) and fibromyalgia (FM) are complex, poorly understood conditions characterized by chronic fatigue, widespread pain, and other debilitating symptoms. Despite their significant burden on public health, these conditions remain under-researched, and prevention strategies are largely unexplored. This scoping review aims to identify and synthesize current knowledge on the challenges and opportunities for preventing ME/CFS and FM, highlighting gaps in research and areas for future study.

Materials and Methods

This review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines. A comprehensive search was conducted across multiple databases, including PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science, to identify peer-reviewed articles, grey literature, and policy documents published in English. The inclusion criteria focused on studies addressing risk factors, potential preventive interventions, and barriers to prevention. Key data were extracted, charted, and thematically analysed to map existing evidence and gaps.

Results

Preliminary findings indicate a scarcity of studies directly addressing ME/CFS and FM prevention strategies. Common challenges include the heterogeneity of diagnostic criteria, limited understanding of etiological mechanisms, and sparse research on prevention strategies. However, several opportunities emerged, and primary prevention addresses risk factors such as infections, environmental stressors, and genetic predisposition. Secondary prevention emphasizes early detection, including leveraging social media data and digital health technologies to identify at-risk populations or undiagnosed patients. Tertiary prevention highlights multidisciplinary approaches to managing chronic symptoms and reducing disease progression. Community-based interventions and early identification strategies through biomarkers and predictive models show promise but require further validation.

Conclusions

The prevention of ME/CFS and FM remains a critical unmet need. Addressing these challenges will require interdisciplinary collaboration, robust funding, and innovative research approaches. Efforts to develop prevention strategies must prioritize understanding disease mechanisms, identifying at-risk populations, and raising awareness among healthcare professionals.

Project No. LZP-2024/1-0343

Project No.RSU-PAG-2024/1-0009

Communication and Educational Work by General Practitioners in Latvia: Essential Factors for Regular Antihypertensive Medication Use

Poster

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Objectives*

This study evaluated the association between patients' experience regarding general practitioners' (GP) communication, educational work, and regular antihypertensive medication use among 30—to 74-year-old adults with arterial hypertension (AH) in Latvia.

Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional study of 930 participants aged 30-74 (median age 62, 38.7% male) with AH from a population survey in Latvia in 2022 was conducted. Logistic regression analysis was carried out to assess the regularity of antihypertensive medication use in relation to experience with GPs' attitude, availability, and appraisal of provided information about the disease, its treatment plan, and complications, adjusting for age, sex, and education.

Results

Most of the participants with AH have been prescribed antihypertensive medications (90.1%, n=839). The majority of them reported regular antihypertensive medication use (84.2%) as well as being satisfied with various communication aspects with a GP (88.7-95.3%) and the information provided about their disease (82.3-92.4%). Receiving information about the health risks of AH (aOR=4.18, p=0.007), being completely satisfied with their GP (aOR=2.81, p=0.011) and the provided information about the diagnostic and treatment plan (aOR=2.04, p=0.006), alternative treatment options (aOR=2.35, p<0.001), and possible complications (aOR=1.70, p=0.036) increased the odds of regular antihypertensive medication use. Also, GP being easy to contact (aOR=2.16, p=0.002) and no difficulties with medication prescriptions (aOR=2.45, p=0.029) increased the odds of regular antihypertensive medication use. No significant association was observed between regular medication use and the GP being compassionate or patient satisfaction with information about the disease and possible side effects of medications.

Conclusions

GP-provided educational and well-explained information about the risks of arterial hypertension, diagnostic and treatment plans, alternative treatment options, and potential complications is positively associated with regular antihypertensive medication use. Additionally, the accessibility of GP and a seamless prescription process increase the odds of consistent medication use. These results highlight the importance of strengthening GP-patient interactions to improve hypertension management.

Cough Syrups for Children: Usage Patterns and Effectiveness According to Parental Assessment

Poster

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Objectives*

Cough is one of the most common health issues in children, often associated with various respiratory infections. To alleviate coughing symptoms, parents frequently use cough syrups, which are available in herbal-based formulations and over-the-counter and prescription medications. The use of cough syrups should be guided by a healthcare professional when indicated. The aim of this study is to analyze the role of cough syrups in treating children's coughs by identifying their indications, selection factors, and most commonly prescribed medications.

Materials and Methods

A quantitative, retrospective cross-sectional study was conducted, using a questionnaire, which was distributed online.

Results

The study received responses from 526 parents of children. The average age of the children was 4-7 years (44.6%). The frequency of coughing was 1-2 times per year in 37%, 3-4 times per year in 42.2%, and 5 or more times in 20.8%. Of the parents, 62.7% sought medical advice from a family doctor due to coughing. A significant majority, 93.9%, reported using cough syrups, while 6.1% did not. Among those who gave their children cough syrup, 72.4% followed a doctor's recommendation. The most frequently prescribed cough syrup by doctors was ambroxol (21.46%). The effectiveness of cough syrup was statistically similar, regardless of the prescriber. However, it was observed that the effect of cough syrup was statistically more noticeable ($P = 1.00 \times 10^{-4}$) when over-the-counter cough syrups were used.

Conclusions

Cough syrups are a popular treatment for children's coughs. However, it is important to choose the appropriate medication based on the child's age, symptoms, and health status. A large number of parents choose cough syrup based on a doctor's recommendation. Doctors tend to prescribe medicated cough syrups more often than herbal-based ones.

Factors Related to Medication Adherence in Multimorbid Patients in Gulbene and Riga

Poster

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Objectives*

WHO data shows that about 50% of patients fail to follow medical instructions for chronic disease treatment, leading to poorer health, increased costs, higher utilization of healthcare services, and greater risks of hospitalization and mortality. This study aimed to identify factors influencing multimorbid (coexistence of two or more chronic illnesses) patients' adherence to medication use from a subjective perspective and compare results from patients in Riga and Gulbene.

Materials and Methods

Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted with multimorbid patients living in Gulbene. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed using inductive content analysis. The data obtained in this study were compared to those from a similar study done in 2023 involving nine multimorbid patients living in Riga.

Results

Summarizing and analyzing the collected data, two groups of patients were identified: adherent and non-adherent patients. For adherent patients living in Gulbene, the primary motivation was fear for their health and pain. Factors influencing non-adherent patients included the cost of medications, difficulties accessing general practitioners from rural areas, and a lack of knowledge about the necessity of medications. For adherent patients living in Riga, the main motivation was improving their well-being. In contrast, the factors influencing non-adherent patients included ignorance, unwillingness, and fear of medications. In both studies, non-adherent patients highlighted forgetfulness and a lack of knowledge as significant factors, while adherent patients demonstrated better theoretical knowledge about medication use and emphasized the importance of establishing a routine as a helpful strategy.

Conclusions

According to the study data, adherence could be improved by simplifying medication regimens, using medications that contain more than one active ingredient and providing patients with more information about the importance of taking their medications.

General Practitioners' Perspectives on Increasing Cancer Screening Uptake in Latvia: Thematic Analysis of Interviews

Poster

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Objectives*

Suboptimal participation in cancer screening (CS) programs poses challenges globally, including delayed diagnoses and adverse health and socioeconomic outcomes. This study explored general practitioners' (GPs) perspectives on promoting CS and potential strategies to improve CS uptake in Latvia.

Materials and Methods

A qualitative design was employed, involving 26 semi-structured interviews with GPs in Latvia conducted between August and October 2024. Data were analysed using thematic analysis.

Results

Key themes identified include patient engagement, responsibility for CS, barriers for GPs in promoting CS, monitoring methods, ways of informing, patient reactions, factors influencing CS uptake, and methods for increasing it.

Regards patient engagement GPs reported low patient self-initiative for CS (reported by 55% respondents), responsiveness when approached (50%), and challenges with reaching non-attendees (36%). Responsibility for CS was generally attributed to GPs (68%) and patients (32%). Lack of capacity (86%) and inconvenient health data systems (77%) were reported as major barriers for GPs to promote CS. For monitoring, GPs most frequently mentioned marks in patient records (55%), and for informing patients, direct communication in appointments (100%) and phone calls (36%). Patient reactions were described as diverse, but mostly positive (68%). GPs considered CS uptake to be depended on variety of individual-level sociodemographic and psychosocial factors (100%) and external factors: informing, inviting, and reminding activities (95%), and accessibility to CS (45%). Suggested improvements predominately included (1)public education (68%) and (2)nudging through reminders/informational nudges (77%) and reducing screening effort (64%).

Conclusions

Improving CS uptake in Latvia requires addressing barriers for GPs - enhancing health data systems and increasing practice capacity. Systematic process of nudging by informing, inviting, and reminding patients, alongside reducing screening effort, is critical. Further research should assess specific suggested interventions and their cost-effectiveness.

Prevalence of Postural Disorders in Children Aged 5–6 and their Primary Prevention in Kindergartens

Poster

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Objectives*

The aim of the study was to evaluate the prevalence of postural disorders in children aged 5-6 in Slovakia and to propose options for primary prevention.

Materials and Methods

Sample: 200 children aged 5-6 (102 girls; 98 boys). Inclusion criteria: children without musculoskeletal disorders - potentially healthy population. Exclusion criteria: children with musculoskeletal disorders treated in rehabilitation. We divided the sample into two groups - experimental - applied health exercises and control group - completed regular exercise programs in kindergartens. Before the exercise, each child was examined by a physiotherapist and his postural status was determined according to the methodology of N. Wolansky. During the following school year, children in the experimental group underwent daily health exercises lasting 15-20 minutes. In the control group, exercises were performed without the intervention of a physiotherapist. At the end of the school year, we performed an exit examination. For statistical evaluation of the assumptions, we used the z-test. Significance: 0.05.

Results

Of the total number of 200 preschoolers, 82 preschoolers (41%) were classified into category A (physiological posture). 80 preschoolers (38%) were classified into category B (mild disorders), while category C (severe disorders) consisted of 38 preschoolers (19%). The incidence of postural disorders in the studied sample was 59%. The z-test confirmed a significant prevalence of postural disorders in 5-6 year old children $z_{stat} = 5,463 > z_{krit} = 2,364$. Health exercises in the experimental group significantly reduced postural disorders $z_{stat} = 8,6 > z_{krit} = 2,3635$. Significant improvement occurred in 50% of children in the experimental group.

Conclusions

The prevalence of postural disorders in 5-6 year old children in Slovakia is high. An effective means of primary prevention is the implementation of health exercises in kindergartens.

Contribution prepared within the framework of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic project No. 09I03-03-V05 - Early stage grants.

Results of OPMD Campaign in Latvia – Check Your Oral Cavity

Poster

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Objectives*

Oral squamous cell carcinoma (OSCC) tends to develop against a background of oral potentially malignant diseases (OPMD), which include leukoplakia, erythroplakia, submucous fibrosis and erosive and atrophic forms of oral lichen ruber planus. OPMD estimated global prevalence is 4.47% in a recent meta-analysis. The primary objective was to facilitate early diagnosis of OPMD for Latvian residents, to prevent its malignant transformation into OSCC, and to raise awareness through organized screening campaigns.

Materials and Methods

Oral cavity screening activities were carried out in RSU SI and local trips to Rēzekne and Ventspils. One month prior to the campaign, a notification was published in a local magazine “*Ievas veselība*”, and in the local press of a particular city, to inform the community about the upcoming screening days. The two-day campaign in RSU SI and Rezekne attracted a total of 170 participants in 2023, and 162 residents in 2024 carried out in RSU SI and Ventspils.

Results

In terms of demographics, the participation included 89+64 females and 11+6 males in 2023, and 77 females and 22 males in 2024. Among the participants, 51% hailed from Riga, while 49% came from other cities across Latvia. During the screenings of Latvian residents, a total of 3 cases of precancerous lesions and 2 cases of oral squamous cell carcinoma were diagnosed each year. Additionally, in Ventspils, 3 cases of precancerous lesions were identified. Data on alcohol consumption and smoking was obtained.

Conclusions

The campaign’s conclusions highlight the necessity of providing opportunities for society to check their oral health. Females still participated more than males despite the fact that males have a higher statistical risk of malignant transformation. It is recommended that similar screening actions be conducted regionally to ensure that individuals from all parts of Latvia have access to these vital health services.

Using Technology to Manage Chronic Diseases: Case of Children with Type 1 Diabetes

Poster

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1. Klaipeda University

Objectives*

To highlight the potential of technology for chronic disease management based on the experiences of children with type 1 diabetes

Materials and Methods

Qualitative research type was chosen for the study. The method of a semi-structured interview was used in the research for data collection. The study involved 15 children with type 1 diabetes for at least 2 years. Use of the content analysis method for the analysis of research data.

Results

The study showed that children with type 1 diabetes successfully use: glucose sensors, pumps, smartphones and smartphone apps, and smartwatches to manage their disease. While children are getting used to using technology, they face challenges in adapting smart apps to different sensors, and they need time and adult support to get to grips with the use of type 1 diabetes technology in everyday life. For children, the simplest and most acceptable technological tools are sensors and smartwatches.

Conclusions

Children bravely use technological tools to manage type 1 diabetes. They are interested in innovations in various technological tools to manage the disease. However, research has shown that children need adult support at the beginning of use.

Risk Factors and Epidemiology of Diseases

Moderating Role of Gender in Association among Heavy Episodic Drinking and Analgesic Use in the Latvian Population

Oral

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Objectives*

Heavy episodic drinking (HED) is recognized as a global and growing public health problem. Previous research has shown that heavy episodic drinkers have increased odds of analgesic use. Nevertheless, this association varies between countries and genders.

This study aimed to analyse the moderating role of gender in the association between HED and analgesic use in the Latvian population.

Materials and Methods

This research used data from the Latvian Adult Population Health Behaviour Study 2022, which included 2835 residents aged 15 to 74. HED was defined according to the WHO definition: consuming 60 grams or more of pure alcohol on a single occasion within the past 30 days. The dependent variables included medication use for headaches and other types of pain in the past seven days. To explore the association between HED and the use of these medications, univariate and multivariate logistic regression models were employed by examining the interaction with gender.

Results

In the study, 35,1% of men and 9,5% of women were identified as heavy episodic drinkers. While the overall odds of using analgesics did not show statistically significant differences between the HED groups, a gender-stratified analysis revealed a notable pattern. Women who engaged in HED were twice as likely to use medication for headaches, regardless of age, and one and a half times more likely to use medication for other types of pain. In contrast, no significant association between HED and analgesic use was observed in men.

Conclusions

The study highlights significant gender interaction in the association between HED and analgesic use, with women more likely to use medication for headaches and other types of pain when they engage in HED. Further research is needed to understand this complex issue more deeply, as the association remains largely unexplored.

Prevalence of Headache Disorders among Adult Population in Latvia

Oral

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Objectives*

This study estimates the prevalence of headache disorders of public health importance in Latvia. Previous European assessments have not included this country.

Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional study in adults aged 18-65 utilised the Headache-Attributed Restriction, Disability, Social Handicap and Impaired Participation (HARDSHIP) questionnaire. Participants were selected using a quota and stratified random sampling method. Computer-assisted telephone interviews were conducted in Latvian and Russian from November 2023 to January 2024, enrolling 2,141 participants with diagnoses based on modified ICHD-3 criteria.

Results

The one-year prevalence of any headache was 70.3% (95% CI: 68.3-72.3), higher among females (78.4% [68.3-72.3]) than males (61.7% [58.6-64.6], $p<0.001$). Migraine was significantly more common among females (31.0% [28.3-33.9]) than males (15.7% [13.5-18.1], $p<0.001$). Tension-type headaches (TTH) affected 41.3% (39.1-43.4) of participants, with no difference between genders. Probable medication-overuse headache was reported by 2.0% (1.5-2.7) more commonly by females (2.6% [1.8-3.8]) than males (1.4% [0.8-2.3], $p=0.04$). Other headache types occurring on 15 or more days/month were reported by 3.2% (2.5-4.1) participants.

Conclusions

Headache disorders of public health importance are common in Latvia, with prevalence estimates well above global means. Latvia is not unique within Europe in this respect. Given the health loss associated with these disorders, the findings suggest a substantial burden of illness.

Problematic Gaming in Association with Substance Use among Adolescents in Latvia

Oral

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Objectives*

With the rise of digitalisation, gaming has become a common leisure activity among adolescents, potentially influencing their mental and physical well-being and reducing real-life socialisation with peers. However, evidence on factors associated with problematic gaming remains limited. This study aimed to examine the prevalence of problematic gaming and its association with substance use among adolescents aged 15-16 years in Latvia.

Materials and Methods

Data were obtained from a nationally representative sample of Latvian adolescents aged 15–16 years (n = 2726) participating in the 2019 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD). Problematic gaming was assessed using the “Self-perceived Problems Related to Gaming” scale. Substance use indicators included alcohol and e-cigarette use in the past 30 days, daily cigarette smoking, and cannabis use in the past 12 months. Logistic regression models were used to evaluate unadjusted and adjusted associations, including an assessment of interaction by gender. Adjustments were made for sex, parental education, and family economic status.

Results

Problematic gaming was reported by 23.1% of adolescents, with significantly higher prevalence among boys (36.4%) compared to girls (9.6%) ($p < 0.001$). Problematic gaming was negatively associated with smoking (aOR = 0.73, $p < 0.05$), alcohol consumption (aOR = 0.74, $p < 0.05$), and cannabis use (aOR = 0.52, $p < 0.001$). No significant association was observed with e-cigarette use, and no significant interaction with gender was identified.

Conclusions

Problematic gaming was associated with lower odds of alcohol consumption, cigarette smoking, and cannabis use. These findings suggest that spending free time gaming, often in isolation rather than with peer groups, and deriving satisfaction from gaming may contribute to reduced likelihood of substance use.

Differences in Anthropometric Measurements Reveal Varying Obesity Rates in the GISTAR Study Population in Latvia

Poster

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Objectives*

The objective of this study was to assess the prevalence of obesity in Latvia based on 4 anthropometric indices - body mass index (BMI), sagittal abdominal diameter (SAD), waist-to-hip ratio (WHR), and waist circumference (WC).

Materials and Methods

The analysis included 7398 individuals (4684 women and 2714 men) aged 40-64 from the GISTAR study, conducted in 7 towns in Latvia from 2013 to 2023. Microsoft Excel was used to analyse the data.

Results

37.1% (n = 1008) of men and 37.5% (n = 1756) of women had a BMI > 30.0. 50.3% (n = 1365) of men had SAD > 22.8 cm, and 53.3% (n = 2495) women had SAD > 20.8 cm. 71.0% (n = 1926) of men had WHR > 0.90 and 45.5% (n = 2130) of women had WHR > 0,85. 65.3% (n = 1773) of men had WC > 94.0 cm, and 73.8% (n = 3455) of women had WC > 80.0 cm. When summing up the 4 anthropometric indicators, the average obesity level was 55.9% for men and 52.5% for women.

Conclusions

This is the first study in Latvia to utilize 4 different obesity metrics (BMI, SAD, WHR, WC) for assessing the overall obesity rate. From both genders, in the age group 40 – 64 years, the lowest obesity rate was found depending on BMI (37.1% of men, 37.5% of women), and the highest obesity rate for men was based on WHR (71.0%), but for women based on WC (73.8%). To summarize, this study reveals differences in obesity rate results when employing different anthropometric indices.

Event-Related Potential P300 in Detecting Early Signs of Cognitive Impairment in Elderly Individuals

Poster

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Objectives*

Event-related potential (ERP) P300 amplitude and latency are promising biomarkers for age-related cognitive decline. They reflect neuroelectric patterns that are associated with the cognitive processing of a stimulus, and thus can be informative in detecting early signs of cognitive impairment, such as seen in mild cognitive impairment. However, inconsistent findings from studies utilizing standard Oddball paradigms limit their application in detecting cognitive impairment as it might not be cognitively demanding enough to reveal cognitive capacity loss, especially if it is not yet observable behaviourally.

This study aims to determine the predictive power of P300 components in various cognitive domains by employing a more challenging 2-back working memory task. It is hypothesized that the 1-back and 2-back tasks necessitating greater cognitive resources will yield delayed P300 latency and diminished amplitude in participants with lower cognitive performance.

Materials and Methods

Participants aged 55 and older with varying levels of cognitive impairment, assessed through the Montreal Cognitive Assessment, will complete cognitive tasks including the 0-back, 1-back, and 2-back working memory tasks. A g.tech Nautilus EEG device with 32 electrodes will record ERP components during these tasks, alongside a battery of cognitive tests evaluating short-term memory, long-term memory, working memory, and executive functions.

Results

It is anticipated that the 1-back and 2-back tasks, requiring increased cognitive resources, but not 0-back task, will reveal delayed P300 latency and diminished amplitude in individuals with lower cognitive performance.

Conclusions

This study's findings aim to improve early detection strategies for cognitive impairment through a deeper understanding of P300 components, with potential implications for monitoring and intervention in aging populations.

Incidence of Depression among Chronically Ill Patients

Poster

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

Depression is one of the most common psychiatric illnesses. According to the data of the World Health Organization, five percent of the world's population has depression.¹ In Latvia in 2018, the prevalence of depression reached 6.7% of the total population.² Searched the incidence of depression among patients with chronic diseases and whether there is an association.

Materials and Methods

Prospective study among adult patients with at least one chronic illness in general practice.

Results

Out of 206 respondents, 46.6% have depression, while 1.5% of respondents have severe depression. The most common groups of chronic diseases are: cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, ophthalmological. We analyzed 18 groups of chronic diseases and searched for association with depression. Among CVD patients, mild to moderate depression is 54% and in musculoskeletal system is 47.7%. A statistically significant association was demonstrated for the otolaryngological diseases. The frequency of depression is higher in the other groups, but it was not possible to obtain a statistically significant association. Patients with at least 3 or more chronic illnesses have depression in 54.9% of cases and only 31.1% had sought help from a mental health specialist.

Conclusions

The prevalence of depression is higher in the population of people with chronic diseases than the average prevalence of depression in the population. In the study, the incidence of depression is significantly higher than expected and only 3 out of 10 patients seek help from a mental health specialist. There is a statistically significant association between otolaryngological diseases and depression. There were no association found between other more common chronic diseases and depression. Mental health should be determine in somatically healthy patients. A chronic disease cannot be considered as a risk factor for depression anymore. The previously defined risk factors for depression are outdated in modern society, they are no longer relevant in diagnosis of depression withinh different patient groups.

Intake of Vegetables and Fruits in Relation to Breast Cancer by Hormone Receptor Subtype in White Caucasian Women: Hospital-Based Case-Control Study

Poster

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Objectives*

Whether vegetables and fruits consumption is associated with lower risk of breast cancer by tumour hormone receptor status is still unclear. The aim of the study was to examine the association between vegetables and fruits and breast cancer subtypes by tumor hormone receptor status.

Materials and Methods

A hospital-based case-control study was performed in 509 cases and 1170 controls. Information on vegetables and fruits consumption and other risk factors was collected via a questionnaire. Logistic regression was used for analyses. All statistical tests were two-sided.

Results

Adjusted odd ratio (OR; 95% confidence intervals (95% CI) found for the highest third, as compared with the lowest third, of intake of carrots was 0.39 (0.28-0.56, P for trend < 0.001), cabbages 0.49 (95% CI 0.35-0.70, P for trend < 0.001), garlic 0.54 (95% CI 0.38-0.75; P for trend < 0.001), and onions 0.63 (95% CI 0.47-0.85; P for trend 0.003). Intake of sweet paprika ≥ 1 -2 times /week as compared with those women with lower intake, also decreased risk of breast cancer 1.75 times (OR=0.57, 95% CI 0.46-0.71; P for trend < 0.001). Consumption of citrus and non-citrus fruits was not associated with risk of breast cancer. There was no evidence of heterogeneity in the associations between dietary items (per category increase) and ER+/PR+, ER+/PR-, or ER-/PR- breast cancer.

Conclusions

The findings suggest that higher intake of vegetables such as carrots, cabbages, garlic, onions, and sweet paprika may reduce the risk of breast cancer in white Caucasian women, regardless of tumor hormone receptor subtype.

Invasive Pneumococcal Disease in Latvia and Factors Associated with Fatal Disease Outcome, 2012–2022

Poster

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Objectives*

Streptococcus pneumoniae is the major pathogen responsible for invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD), manifesting as bacteremic pneumonia, septicemia, and meningitis. The introduction of pneumococcal conjugate vaccines (PCVs) has significantly reduced the incidence of IPD caused by vaccine-covered serotypes. Age, common chronic diseases (not specified), oncology, immunosuppression, HIV infection, nosocomial infection, and sepsis as clinical presentation are described as associated with lethal IPD outcomes. The objectives of our study were to investigate factors associated with death from IPD based on surveillance data in Latvia over 11 year period.

Materials and Methods

We conducted a retrospective population-based cross-sectional study using IPD surveillance data from Latvia over 11 years (2012-2022). IPD cases were defined according to the European Union case definition. Multivariable logistic regression was used to explore associations between case lethality and various risk factors including IPD clinical presentations, comorbidities, *S.pneumoniae* serotypes, and age groups (0-17, 18-64 and 65+).

Results

811 IPD cases were reported during the study period (males, 60,2%). The highest IPD rate was reported in 2022 (6,7 cases per 100,000 inhabitants). The highest mean annual IPD incidence was reported in infants and those aged 65 or more. The most common serotypes in IPD cases were 3 and 19A, 17,4% (131/752) and 10,9% (82/752) respectively. Reported total case lethality was 34.4% (279/811). The highest, at 51.4% (36/70), was reported in 2021. Meningitis as clinical presentation, HIV and hepatitis C infections, PCV13nonPCV10 serotypes, and age 65+ were significantly associated with fatal IPD outcomes. After adjusting for the mentioned factors, only 65+ adjusted OR 1.77, 95%CI 1.295-2.43 p-value <0.001) and PCV13nonPCV10 serotypes (adjusted OR 1.42, 95%CI 1.021-1.985 p-value 0.037) remained statistically significantly associated with the fatal IPD outcome.

Conclusions

The findings highlight the importance of *S.pneumoniae* serotype monitoring and necessity for IPD continuous surveillance and age-targeted vaccination strategies to mitigate the impact of IPD in Latvia.

Public Health and Economic Gains from Sugar Intake Reduction: Scoping Review

Poster

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Objectives*

The study aimed to assess the public health and economic benefits when reducing sugar consumption in Latvia by 10 g/day or 20%. Specific objectives included evaluating the impact on body mass index (BMI), caries prevalence, type 2 diabetes risk, cardiovascular and oncological diseases, autoimmune conditions, mental health, gut microbiome, and healthcare expenditures.

Materials and Methods

A scoping review of literature from 1954 to 2024 was conducted using databases such as PubMed, Cochrane, and WHO eLINA, along with Latvian-language resources. Inclusion criteria targeted studies addressing sugar reduction effects on specified health outcomes. Data from selected studies were synthesised qualitatively and recalculated where applicable. Outcomes were analysed using descriptive summaries and visual data representation.

Results

Reducing sugar consumption by 10 g/day could decrease BMI by up to 2 units in adults and 5.5 units in children. With each additional sugar-sweetened beverage, the risk of cardiovascular diseases increased by 8-10% and the risk of oncology - by 17% in the case of all cancers and 32% - in the case of colorectal cancer. Early-life sugar restrictions reduced early childhood caries risk by 45% and hypertension risk by 19%. Diabetes incidence could drop by 36%, with significant prevention achievable by avoiding sugar intake during the first 1,000 days of life. Reducing sugar consumption improved gut microbiome diversity, reduced autoimmune disease risk, and enhanced mental health outcomes. A 20% sugar tax was associated with a reduction in dental caries by 0.05 teeth in adults and 0.25 tooth surfaces in children. Combined interventions, such as taxation, educational programs, and regulatory policies, showed the most substantial societal health benefits.

Conclusions

Reduced sugar consumption offers significant health and economic advantages, particularly in decreasing chronic disease prevalence and healthcare costs. Early-life interventions and combined strategic policies are key to maximising public health gains.

Vitamin D Deficiency as a Risk Factor for Progression of Idiopathic Scoliosis in Children Aged 10–16

Poster

Mrs. Tatjana Raklinska¹

1. Raklinska Tatjana - Physiotherapist practice

Objectives*

Design is a quantitative cross-sectional study, designed to analyze data on blood vitamin D levels and their association with scoliosis progression. Population exclusion criteria: congenital scoliosis, congenital spinal anomalies, spinal trauma, endocrine and digestive diseases, tumours.

Materials and Methods

To obtain information for the study, the following research methods were used: data on age, sex and diagnosis, which corresponds to diagnosis M41.1 in the SSK classification, were obtained from the patient charts from DATAMED- medical database for medical persons.

The data on radiological examinations and vitamin D blood tests. The data were analyzed using various statistical methods. Data were collected and processed using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and IBM SPSS Statistics 27 software. The conformity of the data with a normal distribution was determined by means of an appropriate correlation analysis, by determining the correlation coefficients and the p values of the resulting coefficients.

Results

1. Relationship between vitamin D levels and Cobb angle

The present work analyses whether there is a linear relationship between vitamin D levels and Cobb angle. Given that the distribution of vitamin D levels is not normal, the Spearman correlation method is used. A statistically significant linear relationship ($r(27) = 0.419$, $p = 0.030$) is found between the Cobb angle and the 25-OH-Vit.D total

2. Correlation of vitamin D levels with changes in Cobb angle

The analysis is whether there is a linear relationship between vitamin D levels and change in Cobb angle (patients were assessed for change in Cobb angle after 1 year and the difference in Cobb angles was calculated to assess deformation progress). Given that the distribution of vitamin D levels is not normal, the Spearman correlation method is used. A statistically significant negative close linear relationship ($r(27) = -0.828$, $p = 0.000$) is obtained between the change in Cobb angle and the 25-OH-Vit.D total

3. There is a statistically significant negative, strong, linear relationship between 25-OH-Vit.D and change in Cobb angle in the female group ($r(18) = -0.806$, $p < 0.001$) and in the male group ($r(9) = -0.928$, $p < 0.001$)

4. There is a statistically significant strong negative linear relationship between 25-OH-Vit.D and Cobb angle change in patients aged up to and including 13 years ($r(16) = 0.855$, $p < 0.001$), and also in patients aged over 13 years ($r(11) = -0.787$, $p = 0.004$)

Conclusions

1. 27 patients participated in the study. 18 of them were women and 9 were men. The mean age of the patients was $M = 13.1$ ($SD = 1.96$) years. The mean 25-OH-Vit.D is $M = 21.44$ ($SD = 9.41$). Mean Cobb angle is $M = 18.8$ ($SD = 7.68$) degrees. The mean change in the Cobb angle is $M = 1.8$ ($SD = 1.22$) degrees.

2. There is a statistically significant linear relationship between the Cobb angle and the 25-OH-Vit.D total ($r(27) = 0.419$, $p = 0.030$). The lower the vitamin D level, the higher the Cobb angle.

3. There is a statistically significant negative strong linear relationship between the change in Cobb angle and the 25-OH-Vit.D total ($r(27) = -0.828$, $p = 0.000$). The higher the vitamin D level, the smaller the change in Cobb angle

4. There is a statistically significant negative, strong, linear correlation between 25-OH-Vit.D and change in Cobb angle in the female group ($r(18) = -0.806$, $p < 0.001$) and in the male group ($r(9) = -0.928$, $p < 0.001$). The higher the vitamin D level, the smaller the change in the Cobb angle.

5. Vitamin D deficiency can be considered as a risk factor for the development of idiopathic scoliosis

Social Determinants of Health

Experiences of Quality of Life and Associated Factors among Adults with Cerebral Palsy

Oral

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Objectives*

By conducting semi-structured interviews to determine adults with cerebral palsy's experiences of quality of life and its associated factors.

Materials and Methods

Nine adults with cerebral palsy aged 26 to 50 years, with GMFCS I to IV and MACS I to III levels participated in the semi-structured interviews. The interviews explored the opinions of adults with cerebral palsy about their quality of life and experiences with the influencing factors. The semi-structured interview protocol included questions about health status, interpersonal relationships, participation, environmental factors and future expectations, and their relationship to quality of life. Data was analysed using the thematic analysis in inductive approach.

Results

Fifteen subthemes related to the quality of life were revealed, which formed five themes: 1) health status - the main influencer – includes self-assessment of health status, the impact of physical and psychological state, as well as the importance of physical activity; 2) aspects of environmental accessibility – aspects that promote and hinder environmental accessibility; 3) the importance of employment and leisure activities – the impact of employment on psychological state and socialization; 4) the significant influence of fellow human being's role – support from close people, negative experiences and difficulties in finding a life partner; 5) different attitudes of society – the positive and negative impact of society.

Conclusions

Adults with cerebral palsy express the opinion that the quality of life is improved by the support of close people, the presence of a job, the ability to drive a car, positive thinking, leisure and physical activities, but the main obstacles are the deterioration of health, the inaccessibility of the environment, negative opinions of society, as well as difficulties in finding a job. Adults with cerebral palsy express getting used to their health condition and movement disorders, have adapted, and learned to live with limitations.

Relationship between Socioeconomic Characteristics of Mothers and Low Birth weight in Latvia

Oral

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Objectives*

Socioeconomic factors exert a profound influence on pregnancy outcomes, impacting the health and well-being of both expectant mothers and newborns. This study examines the interplay between socioeconomic indicators characterizing mothers and the likelihood of delivering a baby with low birth weight in Latvia, while considering maternal habits, health status, and pregnancy experience.

Materials and Methods

Utilizing a descriptive, cross-sectional, retrospective design, data from the Medical Birth Register of Latvia for the year 2022 were analyzed. The study focused on singleton pregnancies, yielding a sample size of 12,836 cases. Data analysis was conducted using crosstabs, chi-square tests, and multivariable binary logistic regression in IBM SPSS Statistics.

Results

Results indicate that higher maternal education emerges as a significant protective socioeconomic factor, independently reducing the odds of low birth weight, even after adjusting for other risk factors. Specifically, mothers with education levels below secondary education (aOR = 2.3; $p < 0.001$) and those with secondary or vocational secondary education (aOR = 1.7, $p < 0.001$) exhibit significantly elevated risks of low birth weight compared to those with higher education. Conversely, after accounting for other variables, factors such as place of residence, marital status, and nationality did not demonstrate a statistically significant association with low birth weight.

Conclusions

These findings underscore the importance of education initiatives in enhancing birth outcomes and provide critical insights for public health interventions aimed at mitigating the risk of low birth weight in Latvia. Obstetricians should include education as a significant risk factor in identifying high-risk pregnant women.

Assessment of Quality of Life in Type-2 Diabetes Patients

Poster

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Objectives*

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is a chronic, incurable metabolic disease, affects a person's life in all ways. The type-2 diabetes mellitus is the leader of all type diabetes mellitus in Latvia (SPKC, 2024). This study aimed to explore the whole range of the quality of life (QoL) deficits using the SF-36v2 questionnaire in type-2 diabetic patients.

Materials and Methods

This cross-sectional study was carried out among individuals aged at or above 27 years with type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM). Patients with prior mental health illness and unwillingness to give consent were excluded. A pre-tested structured quality of life questionnaire, including the SF-36v2 questionnaire, was used. Appropriate ethical measures were ensured. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient and Pearson's chi-square test were used to determine the relationship between the whole range of the quality of life (QoL) and to detect statistically significant associations between the respondent groups.

Results

A total of 321 T2 DM patients with a mean age of 65.4 and a female proportion of 51.6% were included. Overall, 60% of participants rated their QoL as poor, and 68.2% were dissatisfied with their health. The female quality of life were lower than male quality of life, especially in physical ability and functioning area. Less than half (27.61% and 36.08%, respectively) had an average evaluation of their QoL and health. The female QoL scores were below average for the psychological, and social relationship. Data analysis revealed that the patient's level of education and monthly family income were significant positive modifiers and that diabetic complications were significant negative determinants of the QoL score in different domains.

Conclusions

This study found the overall quality of life among T2DM patients below average. Health authorities and clinicians should take these findings into account and incorporate necessary measures to ameliorate negative modifiers of the quality of life of sufferers.

Association between Social Networks, Demographics, and Quality of Life among the Elderly in Latvia

Poster

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Objectives*

Population ageing refers to the increasing proportion of older individuals within a population, which is a global challenge. Social well-being is one of the components of healthy and active ageing and a determinant of elderly people's quality of life (QoL). The aim of this study was to identify social well-being factors associated with QoL.

Materials and Methods

Data from wave 9 of the “Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)”, collected in 2022, were used. QoL was assessed using the Control, Autonomy, Self-realization, and Pleasure scale (CASP-12). Characteristics of social network (SW), including SW size, satisfaction with SW, social integration index, and social connectedness index, were analyzed based on self-reported questionnaires. The respondents were categorized into three age groups: pre-retirement age (50–63 years), retirement age (64–74 years), and late retirement age (75+ years). Linear regression was applied to identify factors significantly associated with QoL. Possible collinearity between all factors was tested. Results were considered statistically significant if $p < 0.05$.

Results

A total of 1676 respondents were included in this study (mean age 68.25 ± 10.25 years), 61.7 % were females ($n = 1034$). Linear regression showed that older age group had a significant negative effect on QoL ($\beta = -0.213$, $p < 0.001$). Satisfaction with SW ($\beta = 0.304$, $p < 0.001$) showed the strongest positive effect. The social integration index ($\beta = 0.181$, $p < 0.001$) and social connectedness index ($\beta = 0.185$, $p = 0.002$) were also significant positive predictors of QoL. Gender ($\beta = -0.20$, $p = 0.370$) and SW size ($\beta = -0.045$, $p = 0.470$) did not show statistically significant effects. Collinearity diagnostics suggested potential multicollinearity between the social connectedness index and SW size.

Conclusions

Older age has a negative impact on the QoL, while satisfaction with SW, social integration and connectedness positively influences it. Gender and SW size are not significant factors, but potential multicollinearity requires further careful analysis.

Comparative Analysis of Dominant Dimensions of Quality of Life in Patients with Atrial Fibrillation

Poster

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Objectives*

When assessing the quality of life (QoL) in patients with atrial fibrillation (AF), several key dimensions must be considered (physical health, emotional well-being, social functioning, disease symptoms, and overall health perception). These dimensions vary depending on the questionnaires and scales used.

Materials and Methods

To perform a comparative analysis of the dominant QoL dimensions well based on popular tools (AFEQT, EQ-5D, SF-36, MLHFQ, AFSSS) used for assessing patients with AF.

Results

There are 10 main QoL dimensions in patients with AF: 1) physical functioning; 2) symptoms and clinical manifestations; 3) emotional well-being; 4) social functioning; 5) cognitive function; 6) treatment satisfaction; 7) economic burden; 8) health perception; 9) sexual health; 10) sleep quality. Physical functioning and symptoms were the most commonly assessed dimensions, with 90% and 85% coverage respectively across the selected instruments. Cognitive function and sexual health received the least attention, with only 60% and 30% of instruments covering these aspects. However, some areas like economic burden and sexual health were less frequently addressed.

Conclusions

AFEQT appears to be the most optimal tool for assessing QoL for patients with AF, as it considers the specific symptoms of the disease and their impact on physical, psychological, and social functioning. The fact that not all instruments cover the full spectrum of QoL dimensions suggests a need for more comprehensive and multidimensional assessment tools to ensure a more holistic understanding of how AF affects patients across different life domains. Instruments such as SF-36, AF-QoL, and EQ-5D are the most commonly used for assessing QoL in patients with AF. While these instruments are effective in capturing a broad range of dimensions, they may not fully address certain areas, such as economic impact and sexual health, that could further enrich the QoL assessments.

Comparative Analysis of Quality of Life Assessment Tools for Patients with Atrial Fibrillation

Poster

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Objectives*

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is associated with high risks of complications and contribute to a considerable decline in Quality of Life (QoL) reducing physical and emotional well-being. It is crucial to consider the impact of AF on daily activities, social functioning, and psycho-emotional state of patients. Assessing QoL in AF patients requires the use of specialized tools, as general questionnaires may not capture all aspects of the disease.

Materials and Methods

Literature search of existing QoL questionnaires for patients with AF, with a focus on: AFEQT (Atrial Fibrillation Effect on Quality of Life Questionnaire), EQ-5D (EuroQol-5D), SF-36 (Health Survey), MLHFQ (Minnesota Living with Heart Failure Questionnaire), AFSSS (Atrial Fibrillation Symptom Severity Scale). Comparative analysis of these tools in terms of specificity, sensitivity, practicality, and general applicability.

Results

The strengths and weaknesses of AFEQT (Atrial Fibrillation Effect on Quality of Life Questionnaire), EQ-5D (EuroQol-5D), SF-36 (Health Survey), MLHFQ (Minnesota Living with Heart Failure Questionnaire), AFSSS (Atrial Fibrillation Symptom Severity Scale) instruments were assessed. AFEQT is a sensitive and specific tool for assessing QoL in patients with atrial fibrillation, covering physical, psychological, and social aspects of life specific to AF. General tools, like EQ-5D and SF-36, are universal tools for assessing overall health status but are less sensitive to the specific symptoms and unique features of AF. MLHFQ may not fully capture the specific symptoms of AF, but AFSSS is limited in its coverage of all aspects of QoL.

Conclusions

AFEQT appears to be the most optimal tool for assessing QoL for patients with AF, as it considers the specific symptoms of the disease and their impact on physical, psychological, and social functioning. At the same time, future research should focus on modifying existing tools that can most accurately capture the specific aspects of QoL for patients with AF.

Development and Support of Health Competence at School: Experience of Children with Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus

Poster

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Objectives*

Research aim is to reveal the opportunities for the development of health competence at school based on the experience of children with type I diabetes mellitus.

Materials and Methods

Research methods. Qualitative research type was chosen for the study. The purpose of a qualitative study is to disclose experiences of children with diabetes, related to the acquisition of opportunities for development of health competence at school based on the experience of children with type 1 diabetes mellitus mellitus. The method of a semi-structured interview was used in the research for data collection; use of the content analysis method for the analysis of research data.

Results

The research found that children find the support and help of teachers and their educators important, but they do not receive help and support from teachers; there are certain educational institutions where teachers try to help children with diabetes mellitus, help control their disease at school, provide necessary conditions to measure blood sugar and inject insulin when needed, closely work with both the child and one's parents. Teachers do not understand what type 1 diabetes mellitus is and how it is managed, thus there are situations that are dangerous for the child's condition. Teachers are not able to select appropriate information about the types of diabetes mellitus on the Internet which creates a false perception of the disease.

Conclusions

The research revealed that children do not consider school to be the environment for the development of health competence, and believe that school does not contribute to its development. The research showed that some children with diabetes mellitus not only do not receive help from teachers in developing and maintaining health competence, but also face challenges related to inappropriate behaviour of the teacher towards the child. Teachers' lack of knowledge about diabetes leads to a lack of understanding of the disease.

Healthy Ageing Across the Baltic and Nordic Regions: Longitudinal Comparison Analysis

Poster

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Objectives*

This study aims to assess and compare healthy ageing by employing the developed Healthy Ageing Index (HAI) in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland.

Materials and Methods

We used data from Waves 8 and 9 of the Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). This analysis employed descriptive statistics, such as median and interquartile range (IQR), and statistical tests like the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test and Kruskal-Wallis H test.

Results

In both waves, Nordic countries had a higher level of HAI (wave 8: median 7,74 (Q1; Q3 6,85 to 8,49); wave 9: median 7,42 (Q1; Q3 6,47 to 8,18)), compared to Baltic countries (wave 8: median 6,73 (Q1; Q3 5,81 to 7,65); wave 9: median 6,57 (Q1; Q3 5,57 to 7,45)).

In Wave 8, there were no significant differences between Lithuania and Estonia ($p = 0.241$). Similarly, Wave 9 revealed no significant differences between Latvia and Lithuania ($p = 0.547$), Lithuania and Estonia ($p = 0.313$), and Finland and Sweden ($p > 0.99$).

Across all countries, the subscales registering the lowest scores were consistently “health” and “activities.”

The subscales of “cognitive,” “autonomy,” and “wellbeing” achieved the highest scores. Subscales with the highest stability over time were “cognitive” and “wellbeing.”

Conclusions

We observed a minimal decrease in the HAI scores over time across all countries. Notably, Sweden, despite initially exhibiting the highest HAI score, experienced a decrease in all five subscales measured. Estonia showed declines in four subscales, while Denmark and Latvia experienced declines in three subscales each. Finland and Lithuania showed declines in two subscales.

This study highlights the influence of distinct categories of factors in shaping the trajectory of healthy ageing. These findings suggest a relative stability in some dimensions of healthy ageing over time but also highlight the need for targeted interventions to address emerging challenges among aging populations.

Socioeconomic and Childhood Determinants of Healthy Ageing in Baltic and Nordic Regions

Poster

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Objectives*

To examine the influence of sociodemographic and childhood determinants on healthy ageing, using the Healthy Ageing Index (HAI) among older individuals in the Baltic and Nordic regions.

Materials and Methods

Across Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden, we examined data from Waves 7 (SHARE-LIFE) and 9 of the Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). Statistical tests included the Mann-Whitney U test, Spearman’s correlation, Pearson Chi-Square test, Kruskal-Wallis H test, and binary logistic regression.

Results

Across all six countries, the subscales measuring “health” (self-rated physical health, 2+ chronic diseases, limitations with activities, GALI) and “activities” (engagement in social activities) consistently received the lowest scores. Though more than half of the respondents in all countries mentioned financial difficulties in their childhood, this did not always translate into difficulties in later life. However, poorer health outcomes were associated with financial issues in later life. Living alone significantly worsened the results. Women experienced lower outcomes in Sweden, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. All countries showed a negative correlation between age, lower educational levels, and HAI. The only behavioral risk factor strongly linked to worse health outcomes in Sweden, Denmark, and Latvia was smoking.

Conclusions

To reduce health disparities in the Baltic and Nordic countries, there is a need to focus on improving health and social engagement, assisting financially vulnerable and isolated individuals, addressing gender-specific needs, promoting education, creating age-friendly environments, and strengthening smoking cessation programs.

Social Work and Social Entrepreneurship

Analysis of Language Competences of Roma Children at the Second Level of Primary School in Slovakia: Arguments for Effective Foreign Language Education

Oral

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Objectives*

The aim of this paper was to analyse the language competences of Roma children at the second level of primary school in Slovakia and to identify effective didactic approaches to foreign language education. The study aimed at identifying the specific needs and challenges these children face and at proposing pedagogical strategies that could improve their language skills. It also investigated which foreign language the pupils were closest to and why.

Materials and Methods

The research involved both quantitative and qualitative methods, which consisted of data collection through questionnaires for Roma pupils, interviews with teachers, parents and the pupils themselves, which allowed for a deeper insight into their experiences and needs. The data was analysed using statistical methods.

Results

The results of the study revealed significant differences in the language competences of Roma children compared to their non-Roma peers. As expected, the challenges identified included lack of support in the home environment, limited access to educational resources, and cultural barriers. Based on these findings, specific and sophisticated pedagogical approaches were suggested, as well as efforts to increase support outside of the school environment and integrate culturally relevant materials into instruction.

Conclusions

This research will provide valuable insights for educational policy makers and educators seeking to improve the educational outcomes of Roma children and support their integration into wider society.

Assessment of Difference in Accessibility of Long Term Social Care in Latvian Municipalities

Oral

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Objectives*

To compare utilization and costs of long term social care services in regions of Latvia. Analyze possible association with population age, proportion of inhabitant over 65 years, municipality payment capacity.

Materials and Methods

Data on utilization of long term social care services were obtained from the reports provided by municipalities and service providers for years 2018-2023. An analysis of differences in the number of long-term care service recipients and service costs across municipalities was conducted. Qualitative information about factors affecting identified difference was collected by in depth interviews and focus groups.

Results

Interregional differences in utilization of long term social care are significant. Number of persons receiving social care services varies from 2 up to 96 per 1000 inhabitants in municipalities. The cost of one unit of service increased from 1665,35 EUR (95% CI: 1511,15: 2133,34) in 2018 till 3976,51 EUR (95% CI: 3156,17:4796,87) in 2023. The difference between municipalities spending per unit of service remains high: from 170 till 4200 EUR in 2018, and from 847 till 16970 EUR in 2023. According to the results of interviews and focus groups discussions, the main factors responsible for interregional differences are availability of service providers in the region, financial capability of municipality, individual financial capability of client.

Conclusions

Municipalities provide different amount of long term social care and spend different amount of financial resources to provide services. Inhabitants are exposed to inequitable access to services. Increasing cost of services together with existing financial system of services undermine long term sustainability of social care system and demand substantial changes.

Empathy as a Professional Skill for Social Workers in Case Management

Oral

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1. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

Social work is a multidisciplinary profession where emotional intelligence and empathy are crucial for building trustful client relationships and effective case management. While empathy is essential in professional practice, its role in everyday social work remains underexplored. The aim of this study is to examine empathy as a professional skill among social work specialists, identifying the dominant type and levels of empathy and their impact on communication and case management.

Materials and Methods

The study employed qualitative and quantitative methods, including the Perth Empathy Scale (PES) to measure empathy levels. Surveys were conducted with social workers and the public, and structured interviews analyzed empathetic practices in social work processes.

Results

A total of 178 social workers (60 with over 15 years' experience) completed the PES, alongside 490 public respondents. The responses revealed a correlation between the level of empathy among social workers and the public's perception of their professional abilities. The data obtained from the PES also indicated that the level of empathy among social workers is high, with cognitive empathy prevailing over affective empathy suggesting a more analytical rather than emotional engagement in professional practices. Additionally, 262 public respondents highlighted empathy's role in understanding clients' unique situations and fostering mutual respect. Meanwhile, 222 respondents emphasized the need to balance empathy with professionalism for effective client support.

Conclusions

Empathy is a crucial professional skill for social workers, promoting trustful communication and a better understanding of clients' needs. While social workers self-assess their empathy levels higher than public perceptions, this gap points to the need for alignment. The public views empathy as a significant factor in effective social work practice, particularly in handling complex cases. These findings suggest the need for public awareness initiatives and empathy-focused training programs to improve social work effectiveness and client satisfaction.

Comprehensive Approach to Social Worker Competencies' Development

Poster

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1. Mykolas Romeris University

Objectives*

The aim of this presentation is to explore the possibilities of developing professional competencies of social workers in response to the needs of modern society.

Materials and Methods

Social work is a dynamic profession that requires a diverse set of competencies to effectively support individuals, families, and communities. The development of these competencies is essential not only for effective practice but also for fostering professional growth and adaptation to the ever-changing social landscape. Social workers must develop strong communication abilities to build rapport with clients and collaborate with professionals from other disciplines. Empathy, active listening, and cultural sensitivity are crucial in understanding and addressing the unique needs of individuals and communities. The ability to analyze situations and develop strategic interventions is vital. Social workers must be trained to assess client needs comprehensively and design appropriate services and support systems. Social workers should be equipped to work with diverse populations. This involves not only understanding cultural differences but also developing practices that are inclusive and equitable, ensuring that interventions respect the backgrounds and values of all clients. Engaging in evidence-based practice requires social workers to continuously develop skills in research methodologies and program evaluation. This ensures that interventions are not only effective but also aligned with the latest findings in social work research. Continuous professional development through workshops, seminars, and courses is essential. This helps practitioners stay updated with best practices, emerging trends, and new research in the field.

Results

The presentation is based on the analysis of secondary data, which includes legal documents (EU and national programs and strategies), research results (national and international level), statistical data and other data (national research results).

Conclusions

Competency development in social work is an ongoing journey that requires commitment, adaptability, and a willingness to embrace new knowledge and skills.

Normative Obligations and Conflict in the Context of Intergenerational Solidarity in Family: Case of Latvia

Poster

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Objectives*

The objective of our research was to identify associations between social and demographic, social and economic factors of an adult child and the level of agreement with the normative obligations towards parents. We also explored associations between frequency of conflict in relationship between an adult child and a parent and a level of agreement to care for the parent and to tend to them when necessary.

Materials and Methods

To collect empirical data, quantitative methodology – web-survey method was used. The call to participate in the study was placed on social networks. 410 questionnaires were completed by Latvian residents who have at least one parent alive. Data were obtained from survey to research the manifestations of intergenerational solidarity in family and its impact factors which was designed during the period from June 2019 to January 2020.

Results

During research “patterns of group aid” or “group samples of aid” were identified:

“Pattern of high readiness to help”: This is a group of adult children in the age group of 50 - 62, married and with children of their own; they express a high readiness to help their parents in various situations.

“Pattern of medium readiness to help”: This is a group of adult children in the age group of 18 - 29, single and without children of their own; they express a medium readiness to help their parents.

“Pattern of high conflict stresses”. This is a group of adult children with constant conflicts with parents; they show readiness to help more often than those whose conflicts arise only sometimes.

Conclusions

1. Research results may be useful in development of individual and collective programmes in support of family relationships, especially in the context of various age groups of adult children, employment, as well as decision-making in settling family conflicts.

2. It is necessary to continue research on manifestations of normative obligations in family, on a more representative basis studying the influence of family norms on manifestation of other dimensions, e.g., on providing real help, connection and frequency of communications between adult children and parents.

Key words: family norms, conflicts, intergenerational solidarity in family

Projekts “RSU iekšējā un RSU ar LSPA ārējā konsolidācija”, Nr. 5.2.1.1.i.0/2/24/I/CFLA/005

Social Enterprises in Latvia: Untapped Resource for the Development of Community Social Work

Poster

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Objectives*

This article explores the implementation of community social work practices in Latvia, emphasizing the potential role of social entrepreneurship in addressing contemporary social challenges. The social work profession is characterized by continuous evolution, necessitating the acquisition of new values and skills to respond effectively to emerging societal issues. The policy landscape of social work in Latvia reflects the global complexities, particularly considering the profound impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict in Ukraine. These challenges underscore the need to shift from traditional micro-practice approaches to community-led, harm-reduction, and preventive strategies, where social enterprises can play a significant role.

Social enterprises can enhance community social work practices by providing group-oriented services and implementing initiatives that promote the well-being of local populations. For example, Ltd. “Mājas TUVU” in Jelgava Municipality delivers services aimed at supporting at-risk youth and low-income families while fostering employment opportunities. Similarly, Ltd. „Visi Var” in Sigulda Municipality employs individuals with disabilities, their relatives, and others at risk of social exclusion. The goods produced by this enterprise are sold in a charity store, with the proceeds reinvested into diverse charity projects and the provision of social services for community members in need.

Despite the evident benefits, the potential of local social enterprises remains underutilized and insufficiently recognized within Latvia’s social work community. This article, grounded in case studies of the aforementioned enterprises, aims to illuminate the opportunities for collaboration between local social service agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and social entrepreneurs. Such partnerships have the potential to significantly enhance the provision of community-focused social services, addressing both immediate and systemic social challenges for the benefit of community members.

Social Work in Child and Youth Wellbeing

Empowerment Factors of Children in Day Care Centres

Oral

Prof. Rita Raudeliūnaitė¹, Prof. Vida Gudžinskienė¹

1. Mykolas Romeris University

Objectives*

The aim of the research is to reveal the empowerment factors of children in day care centres based on the experiences of social workers.

Materials and Methods

Qualitative research was chosen for the study by using the method of semi-structured interview. The obtained data were analysed by using the content analysis method. 11 employees, who work in children's day care centres in different Lithuanian regions, participated in the study.

Results

The research found that social workers' positive attitude towards the child is an important factor in child empowerment. Social workers associate a positive attitude towards the child with knowing the child's strengths and relying on them, seeing opportunities in the difficulties that arise. Research participants associate the child's involvement in decision-making with the opportunity for the child to express one's opinion when decisions related to the child are made, consideration of the child's opinion in decision-making, children's participation in making decisions related to daily activities, tasks. A favourable environment in the day care centre by creating harmonious relationships between day care centre employees and children, between children and between the day care centre employees as well as cooperating with children's parents/guardians are crucial for empowering children. Independent living skills are an important factor in empowering children. In developing children's independence, social workers develop skills of communication and cooperation, constructive conflict resolution, resistance to negative influences, self-control, health-friendly, activity planning and organizing, self-confidence as well as patience in achieving the goals and not giving up when faced with difficulties and responsibilities.

Conclusions

The study revealed that the empowerment of children attending day care centres is determined by the following factors such as positive attitude towards the child, involving the child in decision-making, creating and maintaining a favourable environment in the day care centre, developing skills that promote the child's independence.

Enhancing Social Work with Children and Youth Professionalism through Research

Oral

Prof. Jolanta Pivoriene¹, Dr. Raminta Bardauskiene¹

1. Mykolas Romeris University

Objectives*

The European Joint Master in Social Work with Children and Youth (ESWOCHY), established in 2020, aims to prepare highly skilled social work professionals capable of driving sustainable changes and delivering high-quality services for children and youth. The presentation focuses on how research experience within the program complements professional competence of future social workers with children and youth.

Materials and Methods

A mixed-methods approach was employed. Document analysis of 31 master theses examined research topics, methodologies, settings, and formulated recommendations. In-depth interviews with current students and graduates explored their perspectives on thesis topics, methodologies, and research implications for social work theory and practice. Graduates additionally reflected on the continuation of their research topics post-graduation. Findings were analysed using qualitative content analysis.

Results

Findings show that ESWOCHY students view research as a cornerstone for professional growth and a tool for social change. All three mandates (client, agency, profession) are reflected in their theses, with non-EU students placing greater emphasis on the profession's third mandate—promoting human rights and social justice. The research highlights the program's role in fostering evidence-based practices and interdisciplinary approaches across diverse contexts.

Conclusions

ESWOCHY effectively integrates research into social work education, enhancing professional competence and promoting a balance among the triple mandates. While ongoing research (the last cohort just has started their research) limits the generalizability of the study, future analysis of all four cohorts will provide a comprehensive understanding of the program's impact on social work competence development.

Hateful Behaviour on the Internet among Children and Adolescents in Slovakia

Oral

Mrs. Angela Almasiova¹, Mr. Juraj Holdos¹, Mr. Pavel Izrael¹

1. Catholic University in Ružomberok

Objectives*

Sending and sharing hateful and derogatory messages or comments over the Internet that are directed against a group of people is part of risky behaviour on the Internet, also among children and adolescents. The aim of the research was to determine the prevalence of exposure to hate speech on the Internet in both active and passive forms among children and adolescents.

Materials and Methods

In this paper, we present the results of a research conducted in 2023 on a representative sample of 1,472 children and adolescents aged 11-17 years in Slovakia, focusing on the online behaviour of the target group mentioned above. The research was conducted in the form of a quantitative questionnaire in primary and secondary schools. There was measured exposure to hate speech targeting Roma minority, Migrants, Jews, Muslims, Ukrainians, Russians, LGBTI+ groups. Passive and active forms of exposure and emotions after exposure to the mentioned content were investigated.

Psychosocial variables such as bullying, emotional problems, excessive internet use, sensation seeking, attention problems were adopted from the EU Kids Online project.

Results

Children and young people are most likely to encounter hateful content that is related to LGBTI+ and Roma minority, and least likely to encounter hateful content targeting Muslims. Girls showed significantly more negative feelings than boys after exposure. As for an active interaction, 11% of youth sought out such content and 17% sent or shared such content. Young people actively seeking such content are more likely to experience bullying, more likely to have emotional problems, attention problems, sensation seeking and more likely to use the internet excessively.

Conclusions

Exposure to hate speech is a real experience of young people in Slovakia. Those young people who actively seek out or share hate speech also exhibit a number of negative psychosocial characteristics.

Issues of Sexting in Children and Adolescents in Slovakia

Oral

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Objectives*

Sending messages with sexual content, so-called sexting, is a specific form of risky behaviour. The aim of the research was to determine the prevalence of the experience of sexting in the form of receiving as well as sending sexual messages among young people. Receiving and sending sexting messages were positively correlated with age, with gender differences significantly demonstrated only in the messaging of girls.

Materials and Methods

In this paper, we present the results of research conducted on a representative research sample from the 2023 research study - 1708 young people aged 11-18 years in Slovakia. The research was conducted in the form of a quantitative questionnaire in primary and secondary schools. We investigated the prevalence of sexting in both forms (receiving and sending messages) among young people and differences with respect to gender and age. We correlated selected psychosocial variables with the frequency of receiving and sending sexting messages.

Results

The prevalence of sexting (receiving messages) is 32% and sexting (sending messages) is 10.7%. Significant differences with respect to gender - girls send such messages at a higher rate (G=12.7%; B=8.8%) and receive them (G=33.6%; B=30.5%) at a similar rate. Analyses in terms of age confirmed that the experience of sexting increases significantly with age. The results of the analysis between frequency of sexting (receiving messages) and sensation seeking and depressed mood confirmed a small positive correlation. The results of the analysis between frequency of sexting (sending messages) and sensation seeking, emotional problems, self-esteem and depressed mood confirmed a weak positive correlation. Conversely, a weak negative correlation was observed between sexting (messaging) and feeling safe and accepted at home and feeling happy and life satisfaction.

Conclusions

Sexting is a significant phenomenon in the online behaviour of young people in Slovakia. Involvement in sexting shows an increased tendency of several negative psychosocial characteristics.

Motivation and Demotivation of NEET Youth Entering Work and Education

Oral

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Objectives*

Young NEETs are at risk of long-term social exclusion, which can lead to poverty, marginalization and other social problems. Social work seeks to prevent these negative impacts by promoting their inclusion. The aim of this paper is to explore and analyse the motivational and demotivational factors that affect young NEETs in engaging in the labour market or educational activities and to identify barriers and opportunities that can support their social inclusion. We map the subjective factors leading to the NEET situation.

Materials and Methods

We chose a qualitative research strategy and a structured interview method. The participants of the in-depth interviews are 15 young people in NEET situation from Slovakia from 5 districts from the regions of Liptov and Orava. They are 18 to 30 years old.

Results

The study provides important insights into the factors influencing the participation of NEETs in the labour market and education. Motivational factors include desire for income security and independence, family support, availability of career guidance or training programs that offer them the opportunity for personal development. Conversely, disincentives include lack of job opportunities, low self-esteem, negative past experiences or bureaucratic obstacles. Ineffective functioning of employment services, social stigma or discrimination in the labour market have also been noted.

Conclusions

We propose interventions for social workers aimed at improving the situation of young NEETs, including regional contact points working with this target group as a priority.

Analysis of Factors that Determine Success of Cooperation between the Social Worker and the Case Manager

Poster

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1. Mykolas Romeris University, 2. Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

The aim of this article is to reveal factors that determine success of the cooperation between the social worker and case manager

Materials and Methods

The research is based on the experiences of social workers and case managers. The problematic question: what determines success of cooperation between the social worker and case manager in their activities? The article presents results of qualitative research that reveal factors that influence successful cooperation between the social worker and the case manager.

Results

The data analysis of the conducted research, during which experiences of case managers related to their cooperation with social workers were analysed, revealed that successful is determined by: teamwork of the case manager and the social worker and the social worker's contact with the client. The teamwork of the case manager and the social worker is associated with the support felt by the social worker from the case manager, where the focus is placed on their close cooperation and good contact between the two. At the same time, in terms of the contact of the social worker with the client, establishing a relationship with the client and respect for him are significant. Successful cooperation is determined by: the social worker's personality traits, existing skills and his psychological well-being. Personality traits are traits that help the social worker to create and maintain a relationship with the client and remain professional in providing services. The second factor that determines success is the existing skills of the social worker, with communication, listening, observation skills and professional competencies being highlighted. The well-being of the social worker is the third factor that influences success in his work.

Conclusions

The psychological well-being of the social worker is affected by the positive inner attitude, the desire to help the client overcome difficulties, and a good relationship of the social worker with the manager.

Development of Children's Independent Living Skills in Day Care Centres: Analysis of Social Workers' Experiences

Poster

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1. Mykolas Romeris University

Objectives*

The aim of the research is to reveal the realities of the development of children's independent living skills in day care centres based on the experiences of social workers.

Materials and Methods

Qualitative research was chosen for the study by using the method of semi-structured interview. 9 employees, who work in children's day care centres in different Lithuanian regions, participated in the study. The obtained data were analysed by using the content analysis method.

Results

Social workers prepare children for independent living by developing their communication and cooperation's skills. They teach children how to make contact, have a polite conversation, show empathy, respect the rights of others, resolve conflicts and problems constructively and resist social pressure. When developing cooperation skills, social workers focus on listening to other's opinions, tolerance for different opinions, taking responsibility for a common goal, making decisions by consensus, providing support and asking for help. Social workers develop skills of planning and organizing activities teaching children to set real goals, plan activities, responsibly perform them and not give up in the face of difficulties. Social workers developing children self-awareness, self-control and self-confidence skills teach them to recognize their feelings and be able to express them appropriately, to know their strengths and build on them, to be responsible and dutiful, resistance to the negative influence of others, and how to calm down properly, to make their own decisions, to achieve the set goals, and to overcome the arising difficulties. Children also develop health-friendly skills: physical activity, emotional health, prevention of risky behavior and personal hygiene skills.

Conclusions

The study revealed that in preparing children in children's day care centres for independent life, social workers develop their social skills such as communication, cooperation, planning and organizing activities. Social workers also develop children's personal skills: self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control. They also develop health-friendly skills for children.

Empowerment Factors for Young People in Open Youth Centers

Poster

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Objectives*

To reveal the preconditions for empowering young people in Open Youth Centers

Materials and Methods

Qualitative research was chosen for the study by using the method of semi-structured interview. The obtained data were analyzed by using the content analysis method. 7 social workers, who work in Open Youth Centers participated in the study.

Results

Open Youth Centers aim to develop young people's personal and social competences, to actively engage in community and social processes, to help them overcome difficulties, to solve problems constructively, to encourage them to develop their personal development, to foster entrepreneurship and to develop skills for the labor market. The study revealed that in Open Youth Centers social workers organizing many group activities for the reason develop communication, cooperation and leadership skills. Another important factor in empowering young people is psychological support. This helps young people to cope with stress, depression and other emotional problems. Involving young people in various community project activities enables them to solve their problems, to implement ideas that are important to them and to learn how to plan and organize their personal time. Third important factor in empowering young people is the creation and maintenance of social networks, which serve to encourage young people to participate in projects and initiate their own project activities. This opens the way for young people to improve their well-being, to feel needed, to become autonomous and to achieve their life goals.

Conclusions

Group activities, psychological support, networking and support, and various project activities are important for youth empowerment in Open Youth Centers.

Exploring Hope with Latvian Care Leavers through a Photovoice Project

Poster

Prof. Zoe Kessler¹

1. Salem State University

Objectives*

Latvian care leavers transitioning from state care to independent living, face numerous social and emotional challenges, including stigmatisation, social isolation, and satisfactory employment. These hurdles can diminish their sense of hope and self-determination.

This project aims to give voice to these young people, enabling them to share their personal experiences and perspectives through photography.

The study's objective is: how do Latvian care leavers perceive their lives since leaving care. The study aims to understand how young people transition from care and what happens to them after they leave care.

Materials and Methods

Photovoice combines photography and narrative to empower marginalised individuals to document and reflect on their experiences. In this project, care leavers aged 18-25 captured images representing their understanding of hope, resilience, and aspirations for the future. Conversations followed, where participants shared the meaning behind their photographs and reflected on their individual and collective experiences. These discussions were transcribed, analysed thematically, and linked to the visual data, allowing for a rich and nuanced interpretation of how they see themselves and their lives within this context.

Results

The findings from this Photovoice project highlight the complexities of the lived experiences among Latvian care leavers. Hopefulness emerged as an overarching theme; participants expressed a strong desire for personal growth and future stability and acknowledged the significant social barriers they faced. Additional themes of nature, animal companionship, relationships, self-representation, and hope provide rich insights into the emotional lives of care leavers.

Conclusions

This project underscores the importance of participatory research methods in social work, emphasising the need for targeted support systems that foster hope and resilience in vulnerable populations transitioning from care to independence. This research contributes to the broader discourse on youth empowerment. It highlights the potential of Photovoice as a powerful tool in advocating for policy changes and support mechanisms for care leavers across Europe.

Gender-specific Differences in Motivations, Perceptions of Barriers and Emotional Responses in Volunteering among Secondary School Students

Poster

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Objectives*

The present empirical study systematically examines structural gender differences in several aspects of volunteering among high school youth, specifically in the areas of motivation, perception of barriers, and emotional experience. It uses sophisticated nonparametric statistical methods to validate the results.

Materials and Methods

By applying the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, non-normality of the distribution of the variables under study was demonstrated, which led to the subsequent use of the Mann-Whitney U-test for the analysis of independent samples.

Results

The results clearly confirmed the existence of statistically significant gender differences ($p < 0.001$) in the level of motivation to volunteer, with female students achieving higher mean scores ($M = 2.09$; $SD = 0.59$) compared to male students ($M = 1.64$; $SD = 0.74$). Equally significant divergences were noted in the perception of barriers (females: $M = 2.17$; $SD = 0.50$; males: $M = 1.95$; $SD = 0.59$), confirming the hypothesis that females are more sensitive to limiting factors. The most striking part of the analysis was the decomposition of emotional responses to volunteering, where women showed statistically significantly higher scores in perceived positive emotions such as admiration (Mann-Whitney $U = 32988$, $p < 0.001$), respect ($U = 34373$, $p < 0.001$), and satisfaction ($U = 37317$, $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, males demonstrated higher intensity of negative affects including envy ($U = 38793$, $p < 0.001$), repulsion ($U = 38872$, $p < 0.001$), and fear ($U = 41892$, $p = 0.002$).

Conclusions

The aforementioned gender differences in emotional experience underline the complex psychological profile of volunteering. They also imply the need for a targeted approach in policy making that takes into account the interaction between gender identity and specific determinants of motivation in secondary school youth.

Schools as an Information Channel for Knowledge on the Purchase and use of Alcohol Among Adolescents

Poster

Mrs. Ieva Saukuma¹

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Objectives*

The aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of school programmes developed for the prevention of alcohol use on schoolchildren's awareness of the regulatory aspects of alcohol purchase and use, as well as on schoolchildren's knowledge of myths related to alcohol use. Previous studies point to gaps in the information contained in school programmes in the group of adolescents with experience of alcohol use. Latvia is one of the European countries where the proportion of underage adolescents who have used alcohol is higher than the European average.

Materials and Methods

The study involved a longitudinal survey of adolescents in Latvian schools from the beginning of the 7th grade (T1, mean age 12.9, SD 0.48) to the end of the 9th grade (T4, mean age 15.3, SD 0.59) with the aim to assess whether the information provided in the school programme contributes to adolescents' knowledge about the consequences of alcohol purchase and use.

Results

As a result of the study, it was concluded that although the information contained in the school curriculum does not prevent adolescents from using alcohol in general, it does increase adolescents' knowledge about the aspects of alcohol purchase and use. However, this positive benefit of the information received in the school programme is diminished in situations where adolescents have personal experience of alcohol use.

Simulation in Education of Social Workers from the Perspective of Competencies Development

Poster

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Objectives*

The updated social work standards in Latvia (2020) and Lithuania (2019) highlight the need for future social workers to develop new competencies, particularly in client communication and working with unmotivated clients (Ex Ante, 2017; Students' Assessment of Practice, 2021). The 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) recognize simulation as a crucial element in acquiring practical experience in social work education.

The aim of this study is to map empirical research on simulations in social work student competency development. The following questions have been addressed: how do simulations affect competency development in social work education? Which competencies are developed through simulations? What areas require further research in the use of in-class simulations?

Materials and Methods

Method: This study is based on 3 sources: 1) A scoping review of databases such as ProQuest, Medline, Scopus, and others was conducted, using keywords like ("face to face simulations" OR "simulation-based learning") AND ("social work students" OR "social work education") and others. A total of 116 studies were screened using Rayyan; 2) Pilotstudy - Evaluation of student skills after in-class simulations; 3) Reports from practice supervisors on students' performance during field placements.

Results

The literature review reveals that studies mainly focused on developing skills in intervention, prevention, group work etc. Teaching methods emphasized affective learning experiences like flipped learning, behavioral activation etc. Further research is needed on the impact of simulations on student competence, skill transfer to field education, work readiness, and competency changes.

Both the literature analysis and the analysis of opinions from students and practice supervisors lead to the conclusion that simulation is a highly valuable method for competence development.

Conclusions

Both the literature and the results of the pilot study confirm that simulation is a valuable method for competence development, bridging theory and practice. The detailed research results will be presented at the conference.

Social Rehabilitation Practices for Children in Alternative Care: Slovakian–Portuguese Perspective

Poster

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Objectives*

The main objective of this qualitative study is to explore social rehabilitation practices in terms of methodologies, interventions, and support systems applied during the rehabilitation process in Slovakia and Portugal.

Materials and Methods

The main data collection tool was a semi-structured interview with 11 participants (5 Slovaks, 6 Portuguese). The research data were subsequently processed through thematic analysis.

Results

The study explores the key aspects of effective social rehabilitation practices for children in alternative cases in Slovakia and Portugal, focusing on i) the intake process, ii) established systems, and iii) challenges faced by social workers in both countries. The well-being of children is influenced by various systems, including institutions, decision-making, and interactions with families and professionals.

Conclusions

Collaboration among entities is crucial in child protection services, and support networks are essential for alternative care. Portugal and Slovakia's system focuses on families and shelter, but challenges persist. Systemic reform is needed to address abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

Strategic Directions of Nursing and Midwifery

Midwives' Views on the Concept of Normal Childbirth and their Experience in Protecting them in a Hospital in Collaboration with a Woman

Poster

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Objectives*

To study midwives' opinion on the concept of normal childbirth and their experience in protecting them in a hospital in collaboration with a woman.

Materials and Methods

A qualitative study was carried out using the phenomenological method. Midwives were invited to participate in a semi-structured interview in accordance with the selection criteria, informing in advance about the subject, purpose and confidentiality of the answers provided. The interview consisted of 12 questions, of which four were demographic questions, seven questions about normal childbirth, four about the midwife's cooperation with the woman and one additional question if the midwife would like to add anything else on this topic.

Results

The study involved 7 midwives, aged from 24 to 50. Their work experience ranged from 2.5 to 26 years. The midwives were from various Latvian maternity hospitals, both high-risk and low-risk. The interview responses were divided into 16 categories, 9 subtopics and 8 topics. The following themes were identified: physiologically normal childbirths with the support and cooperation of a midwife, without medical manipulations; analgesia during childbirth; perineal tears during childbirth; medical manipulations during childbirth; the health and well-being of the child during and immediately after childbirth; midwifery and doctor's work, successful cooperation between women and midwives; barriers to communication between the midwife and the woman.

Conclusions

A midwife compares a normal birth to a physiological birth, with minimal or no medical manipulations involving a healthy woman and a healthy child. Maintaining a normal birth requires a change in labor positions, encouragement and awareness. The most common factors that determine a midwife's cooperation with a woman in a normal birth are the compliance, knowledge and good communication of both the midwife and the woman.

The Role and Influence of Society on Individual Health: Psychological Insights and Challenges

Bridging Art Therapy and Community Work in Latvia: Organisational Insights and Challenges

Oral

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Objectives*

This study explores how Latvian community organisations perceive collaboration with art therapists, focusing on challenges in joint projects, organisational roles, and the competences required for art therapists to address community-specific needs. It examines three organisations involved in community-based art therapy (CBAT) projects, either as implementers or as collaborative partners: an art gallery, an organisation supporting individuals recovering from violence, and an organisation representing LGBT communities. The goal is to better understand the dynamics of collaboration and the systemic challenges of integrating art therapy into community practices.

Materials and Methods

A mixed-methods approach was used, combining a scoping review with semi-structured interviews. The scoping review analysed 74 peer-reviewed studies, summarising international experiences with collaboration models, competencies, and challenges to implementation, following the PRISMA-ScR guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018; Peters et al., 2020). Comparative views, such as how interdisciplinary practices promote collaboration between sectors, informed the thematic analysis of Latvian organisations. Semi-structured interviews with representatives from the three organisations were analysed using Braun and Clarke’s reflexive thematic analysis framework (2019; 2022), identifying collaboration dynamics, challenges, and competencies.

Results

Thematic analysis identified key insights. Organisations emphasized the need for art therapists to proactively introduce their services and establish connections with communities. Key competencies included emotional intelligence, strong communication skills, and understanding community-specific contexts. For example, familiarity with LGBT symbols and cultural significance supported engagement, while trauma-informed approaches addressed the needs of individuals recovering from violence. Challenges included financial instability, fluctuating participant engagement and lack of human resources. Despite these challenges, organisations recognised the potential of CBAT to promote social inclusion and enhance community well-being.

Conclusions

Effective collaboration between art therapists and community organisations requires clear communication, well-defined roles and targeted training. Strengthening interdisciplinary practices and developing sustainable collaboration frameworks are essential to maximise the impact of CBAT.

Interventions for Developing Selective and Sustained Attention in Adolescents in Sport: Scoping Review

Oral

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Objectives*

Studies reveal that selective and sustained attention are among the most important aspects of young athletes' path to success. Selective and sustained attention is an important influencing factor for better performance, which can be developed at different age stages, including adolescence. This scoping review aims to identify interventions used to develop selective and sustained attention in adolescent athletes.

Materials and Methods

Studies were selected in April 2024 using 6 scientific databases Science Direct, Pro Quest, PubMed, Scopus, Cochran, and EBSCO host. The study was conducted using the guidelines developed by the PRISMA-ScR. Studies were included if they met the stated inclusion criteria. The method of data analysis was narrative synthesis. Data were retrieved using MS Excel spreadsheets, incorporating information to answer the research questions.

Results

Seven studies met the inclusion criteria and were included in the scoping review (n=878, age 11–20 years, study participants n=573, 48% girls). In total, N=8 interventions were identified, of which n=6 interventions were for the development of selective attention, and n=2 interventions for the development of sustained attention. The duration of interventions was from 4 to 10 weeks, the number of sessions from 6 to 27 sessions, and the duration of interventions from 30 minutes to 2 hours. To determine the development of selective and sustained attention, N=28 different instruments were used, of which n=25 were cognitive tests and n=3 motor function determination tests.

Conclusions

All studies showed a positive effect of the intervention on the development of selective and sustained attention. The results reveal that the forms of intervention chosen in the research can improve the development of selective and sustained attention for adolescents in sports, so new interventions in sports for adolescents should be continued, using cognitive tasks, cognitive motor-dual tasks, and mindfulness-based models, enriching the range of interventions in sports psychology and the training process.

Spirituality in Personal and Professional Lives of Helping Professionals

Oral

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Objectives*

The aim of this qualitative study is to describe the experience of spirituality in the personal and professional lives of helping professionals. The relevance of the study is highlighted by the growing interest in spirituality within the context of helping professions and society at large. The global geopolitical situation has intensified the need for internal resources, which are often not activated under more stable life conditions. Based on theoretical concepts of spirituality as a resource for resilience and the search for meaning in both professional practice and society, two main research questions were formulated about 1) the experience of spirituality in the personal lives of helping professionals, and 2) the experience of integrating spirituality into their professional practice

Materials and Methods

Fifteen helping professionals replied to semi-structured interview questions that focused on their understanding of spirituality, self-assessment regarding spiritual growth, and the application and promotion of spirituality in personal and professional contexts. The qualitative data obtained were analyzed using an inductive thematic analysis approach.

Results

The data analysis revealed seven main themes. Five themes pertained to spirituality in a personal context: 1) Spirituality as an internal phenomenological experience; 2) Spirituality and transcendence; 3) Spirituality as a promoter of life force; 4) Challenges on the path of spiritual growth; 5) Music, nature, mindfulness, and meditation as tools for spiritual growth. Two themes in the context of professional practice were connected with the 1) Impact of personal spiritual journey on professional life; and 2) Spirituality as a vital resource in professional work.

Conclusions

The study results indicate a diverse range of experiences and attitudes toward spirituality in the personal and professional lives of the participants. All participants recognized the importance of spirituality and expressed a positive attitude toward it as a resource in various personal and professional life situations.

Keywords: spirituality, spiritual growth, helping professions, thematic analysis.

War-related Burnout in Ukrainian Civilians: Coping under the Strain of Three Years of Russia’s Military Invasion

Oral

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1. Ivan Franko National University of Lviv

Objectives*

Every war spawns a war-affected population enduring for decades. The depth of trauma depends on threats, losses, destruction, the war’s duration, and emotional involvement. For millions of Ukrainians, the war has become the primary context of their lives, with approximately 90% of civilians actively volunteering and supporting the front. Prolonged exposure to existential threats and profound losses deteriorates mental health, leading to war fatigue and war-related burnout.

This study examines the dynamics of war-related burnout in Ukrainian civilians during the third year of the war.

Materials and Methods

The research, conducted in the spring (480 participants: 34% male, aged 18–73) and autumn (490 participants: 31% male, aged 18–67) of 2024, utilized the War-related Burnout Scale, War Experience Survey (M. Klimanska, I. Haletska), and the Brief-COPE Inventory (C. Carver).

Results

War-related burnout was analyzed through four indicators: Exhaustion – fatigue from constant stress; War-related self-efficacy – perceived significance of actions supporting the front; Informational cynicism – emotional detachment and reduced interest in war-related information; Activity cynicism – decline in motivation and belief in the effectiveness of one’s actions to influence the war. A decrease in Exhaustion ($p \leq 0.05$) and War-related self-efficacy ($p \leq 0.01$) was observed, while Activity-related cynicism increased ($p \leq 0.01$). These changes were accompanied by heightened internal tension, fear for one’s life ($p \leq 0.01$), and fear for loved ones ($p \leq 0.05$). Additionally, a strengthening of both constructive coping strategies (positive reframing, humor, social support) and destructive ones (denial, sedative use, self-blame) was noted ($p \leq 0.01$).

Conclusions

Three years living under existential threats have significantly increased internal tension and fears for one’s life and loved ones. The paradox of strong belief in victory coupled with distancing from war-related information reflects growing emotional tension and deep trauma. This persists despite intensified coping strategies, both constructive and destructive, highlighting the complex psychological response to prolonged exposure to extreme circumstances.

Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction, Intrinsic Motivation, and Studying Sports Protect University Student-Athletes from Burnout: Insights from Latvia

Poster

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Objectives*

The study explored the prediction of athlete burnout by basic psychological needs satisfaction in sports, combined with the intrinsic motivation in sports and sociodemographic characteristics of student-athletes. The protective effects of both psychological predictors were expected.

Materials and Methods

The participants were 219 student-athletes from 19 to 33 ($M = 22.3$ and $SD = 3.2$ years) who participated in sports from recreational (38%) up to World/Olympic (9%) levels, with a mean sports experience of 10.1 ($SD = 5.2$) years. The study used three surveys, presented in Latvian: Sports Motivation Scale-II (SMS-II), Basic Psychological Needs in Exercise Scale (BPNES), and Athlete Burnout Questionnaire (ABQ).

Results

Higher need satisfaction was the main predictor of lower burnout in the frame of SEM. Higher intrinsic motivation, participants' age, and studying sports also predicted lower burnout.

Conclusions

The bifactor model confirmed athlete burnout as a syndrome, integrating its specific components. As the main protective factor, psychological needs satisfaction in sports should be prioritized in students-athletes training.

Correlation between Adverse Childhood Experiences and Suicidal Behaviour among 10th to 12th Grade Students of Riga State Gymnasiums and Riga Vocational Secondary Schools

Poster

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1. Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, Faculty of Medicine, Rīga Stradiņš University

Objectives*

To evaluate the association between adverse childhood experiences and suicidal behaviour among 10th to 12th grade students of Riga State gymnasiums and Riga vocational secondary schools.

Materials and Methods

A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted based on convenience sampling. Research instrument: an anonymous self-report survey consisting of demographic questions, ACE scale, and an excerpt from the YRBS survey section on suicidal behavior. Data collection period: December 2023 to February 2024. Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 29.0.

Results

The study included 1314 respondents, 51.1% gymnasium and 48.9% vocational school students. 20.2% of respondents scored ≥ 4 points on the ACE scale, of which 14.4% students from gymnasiums and 26.1% from vocational schools. Depression, suicidal ideation, and suicide planning in the past year were reported by 43.1%, 25.3%, and 15.7% of students, respectively, while 9.1% of students attempted suicide in the past year. Among respondents who scored ≥ 4 points on the ACE scale, 74% reported depressed mood, 50% reported suicidal ideation, 34% reported suicide planning, and 25% reported suicide attempt in the past year.

Conclusions

Students with higher scores on the Adverse Childhood Experience scale showed more pronounced suicidal behaviour - suicidal ideation, planning, and suicide attempts in the past year. Vocational school students had higher ACE scale scores, and more pronounced suicidal behaviour compared to gymnasium students. Adverse childhood experiences and suicidal behaviour indicators were more pronounced in females; students who rated their family's financial situation as average or poor; those who lived alone, two or three in one household; and students raised by a single parent or foster parent(s).

Mental Health of the Population of Ukraine as a Result of the Military Conflict (Analysis of Negative Consequences)

Poster

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Objectives*

To describe the problem of the deterioration of the mental health of the population of Ukraine as a result of military actions and the possible negative consequences associated with this.

Materials and Methods

The empirical basis of the study was the results of a survey of the population of Ukraine (1 723 respondents) and separately internally displaced persons (1 527 respondents) from September to December 2023 using Google Forms software and WHO statistics. The research methodology includes theoretical and empirical methods: dialectical, analytical, synthetic, statistical, and sociological ones. The theoretical framework is based on an analysis of publications from the central database of systematic reviews PubMed.

Results

Mass traumatization of society creates a state of vulnerability that affects their mental health. According to the survey results, since the beginning of the full-scale war in Ukraine, citizens have experienced: psychological health complications (71.2%), mental damage (29.7%), physical damage (18.4%). A survey of internally displaced persons showed that as a result of Russian aggression they have suffered the following damage: psychological health complications (65.2%), mental (33.5%), property (52.1%), physical (21.5%). During the war, the fundamental human right to life and a safe existence in one's own country are violated. Thus, the basis for aggression, protests, violence and conflicts is created both at the personal and social levels. According to WHO, about 10 million people in Ukraine are at risk of mental disorders.

Conclusions

Ukrainian citizens and war veterans who have suffered will inevitably face difficulties in returning to civilian life, including problems with employment, as a result of which the psychological trauma they have already received during hostilities will only deepen their inability to adapt to new conditions. These psychosocial factors can become additional catalysts for conflict-prone situations. Restoring civilian life will be difficult if the state humanitarian policy does not provide the population with psychological rehabilitation.

Multidimensional Scale of Subjective Well-Being for Employed Persons (MSWEP): Results of a Pilot Study

Poster

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Objectives*

Employee Subjective Well-Being (ESWB) is an important indicator that has a direct impact on both the professional development of the individual and the overall effectiveness of the organization. Recently, the importance of a multidimensional approach to a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing professional well-being has been increasingly emphasized. The development of the MSSWEP and the implementation of a pilot study are essential for an accurate and multidimensional approach to assessing employees' subjective well-being, based on internationally accepted theoretical models and methods.

Materials and Methods

The development of the MSSWEP is based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Health Organisation (WHO), and Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) models. The study involved 4 organizations from different sectors and a total sample of 187 respondents who were surveyed online between 10 July and 10 August 2024. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was used to determine the factor structure. Cronbach's alpha and MacDonal's omega coefficients, as well as response and discrimination indices, were calculated to test the reliability of the instrument.

Results

After factor analysis, 45 questions were selected from the original 48 and grouped into 10 determinants of ESWB: subjective well-being, inclusion, social support, psychosocial risk, intensity, psychosomatics, career development, health risks, financial security, and autonomy. Cronbach's alpha showed high consistency for 7 factors (0.797-0.925) and low consistency for 3 factors (0.624-0.691). The values of the response and discrimination indices were mostly in line with scientific standards, indicating a high level of precision of the instrument.

Conclusions

The MSSWEP is a reliable instrument, but further refinement of the scale and validation in a larger sample is needed.

Nature Relatedness, Self-Rated Health, and Well-Being among University Students

Poster

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Objectives*

Research consistently indicates that individuals who feel more connected to nature experience higher levels of well-being. Furthermore, evidence suggests that nature-based interventions, such as ecotherapy, can serve as effective therapeutic practices for enhancing mental health and fostering a sense of community. However, well-being, and particularly the relationship between nature relatedness and well-being, remains under-researched among university students. To address this gap, the study aimed to explore nature relatedness, self-rated health, and well-being indicators, and their associations in Latvian university students.

Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional online survey was conducted among students from universities and other higher education institutions in Latvia (N = 304, with 91% identifying as female). The survey employed the Nature Relatedness Scale (NR-6) and the World Health Organization’s Well-being Index (WHO-5) as primary measures. Scores were measured on a 5-point Likert scale for the NR-6 and a 6-point Likert scale for the WHO-5, both standardized to a maximum score of 5. Additionally, single-item questions were included to assess self-rated physical and mental health.

Results

Results indicated relatively low levels of student well-being (Mdn = 2.40, IQR [1.40, 3.35]), self-rated physical health (Mdn = 3.00, IQR [2.00, 3.00]), and self-rated mental health (Mdn = 3.00, IQR [3.00, 3.00]), compared to higher levels of nature relatedness (Mdn = 3.80, IQR [3.04, 4.33]). Nature relatedness showed a statistically significant but low to moderate positive correlation with well-being ($r = .354$, $p < 0.001$), self-rated physical health ($r = .298$, $p < 0.001$), and self-rated mental health ($r = .292$, $p < 0.001$).

Conclusions

The findings highlight the need to address the well-being levels among students. While nature relatedness appears to play a statistically significant role in well-being, its overall impact seems moderate. Further research with larger and more diverse samples across a broader European context is recommended to gain deeper insights into these relationships.

Role Models of Ageing and their Impact on Choosing Protective Behaviours

Poster

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Objectives*

To determine how the presence of role models for successful aging influences attitudes toward aging and whether it changes individuals' behaviors and healthy lifestyles. The study also aims to identify significant factors that could be utilized in designing interventions for successful aging.

Materials and Methods

A total of 207 individuals aged 18 to 64 participated in research, aiming of describing their role model of successful aging and analyzing their behavior regarding preparation for aging. The propose of the study is to correlate the chosen categories of role models with individuals' protective behaviors, fear of aging, real and subjective age, as well as perceived proximity to aging. Open-ended questions were coded thematically, while quantitative factors were analyzed using factor analysis and mediation.

Results

More than half of the respondents reported having a role model for aging among relatives or acquaintances, while around a third referred to public figures (actors, politicians, musicians). Having close family role models for happy aging significantly increased the expected lifespan and reduced the fear of aging. Fear of aging was generally associated with a lower assessment of one's physical health, mental state, and professional relevance. Women showed a higher fear of aging than men, regardless of their age. Key qualities identified in role models included activity, energy, personal traits, character, and cognitive abilities. Primary fears associated with aging included helplessness, frailty, loss of health, loneliness, and death. Respondents expressed a desire to avoid illness, maintain mental sharpness, and achieve personal goals before it's too late.

Conclusions

The presence of aging role models, especially among relatives, positively influences perceptions of aging and increases expected lifespan. These role models also shape protective behaviors, such as regular medical check-ups, engaging in sports, and making healthy dietary choices. Higher earners were more likely to eat healthily, save for retirement, and proactively monitor health through timely medical consultations.

Stress Resilience as a Determinant of Women’s Psychological Well-Being during War

Poster

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Objectives*

of the study is to identify which components of women’s stress resilience affect their psychological well-being during wartime.

Materials and Methods

The participants were 108 women aged 21 to 40 years ($M=26.84$) who lived in relatively safe areas of Ukraine. Stress resilience (independent variable) was assessed with V. Rozov’s methodology, while psychological well-being (dependent variable) was measured with C. Ryff’s methodology. The study was conducted during the second and third years of the Russian-Ukrainian war (2023–2024). Mathematical and statistical processing included cluster, regression, comparative, correlation ($p<.05$) and factor analysis ($>.50$).

Results

Participants were divided into two clusters: the first (54.6%) showed a tendency towards an above-average level of psychological well-being ($M_1=6.813$), while the second (45.4%) exhibited a tendency towards an average level ($M_2=5.061$) with $t=6.105$. Common determinants of psychological well-being for both groups included: the effect of life self-organization on environmental mastery ($\beta_1=.417$; $\beta_2=.319$), self-confidence on autonomy ($\beta_1=.516$; $\beta_2=.464$), receiving social support from others on positive relationships ($\beta_1=.431$; $\beta_2=.365$), and optimism on the overall level of psychological well-being ($\beta_1=.324$; $\beta_2=.354$). These results were confirmed by correlation analysis (r ranging from .365 to .584). No impact of stress resilience was found on self-acceptance, life goals, or personal growth. Differences between the two clusters were identified in the effect of optimism: on environmental mastery for the first ($\beta_1=.370$) and on positive relationships with others for the second ($\beta_2=.356$). Five-factor models of the structure of women’s psychological well-being in relation to their stress resilience were constructed for both clusters, confirming the role of self-confidence in achieving autonomy and social support in building positive relationships with others.

Conclusions

Resources for improving the overall psychological well-being of women during wartime include their optimism, zest for life, and active life stance. Specific components of psychological well-being are influenced by self-belief, a sense of social belonging, and the ability to prioritize tasks.

Utilizing Technology in Psychological Care and Therapy: Innovative Approaches and Solutions

Adaptation and Validation of the Emotion Regulation Strategies for Artistic Creative Activities Scale (ERS-ACA) in Latvian Art Therapy Practice

Oral

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Objectives*

This study aimed to adapt the *Emotion Regulation Strategies for Artistic Creative Activities Scale* (ERS-ACA, Fan-court et al., 2019) into Latvian and integrate it into art therapy's assessment and evaluation process. The ERS-ACA is a novel instrument designed to identify and measure emotion regulation strategies used when engaging in artistic creative activities. The scale includes 18 items, representing an overall “general” factor of emotion regulation, along with three subscales that capture specific strategies: avoidance, approach and self-development strategies. The study also aimed to assess whether the ERS-ACA could serve as a unified assessment tool for art therapists across various specialities, helping them profile clients and guide therapy development.

Materials and Methods

In the main study, 311 adults (81% women, 19% men, aged 18–82 years, $M = 49.5$, $SD = 12.8$) completed an online self-report questionnaire, with 59 participants also taking part in the test-retest survey. Statistical analyses were performed on the Latvian version of the ERS-ACA to assess internal reliability, factorial validity, convergent validity, and test-retest reliability. Additionally, art therapists incorporated the scale into their practice over a 4–6 week period to evaluate its practical applicability.

Results

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses using the minimum residual method, consistent with the original instrument, supported the hierarchical factor structure, accounting for 51% of the variance. During the integration phase, the scale demonstrated high reliability in identifying emotion regulation strategies, proving its utility in art therapy's assessment and evaluation process phases.

Conclusions

The study provided strong evidence for the reliability and validity of the Latvian version of the ERS-ACA scale. Its successful integration into art therapy practices suggests it is a valuable tool for therapeutic assessment with the potential for further scientific research in emotion regulation strategies.

Keywords: emotion regulation strategies, self-report questionnaire, ERS-ACA, reliability, validity, art therapy.

Telehealth in Arts Therapies for Older Adults with Neurological Disorders

Oral

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Objectives*

Arts therapies have shown significant benefits in enhancing the psychological, cognitive, and social well-being of older adults with neurological disorders (ND). Integrating these therapies into telehealth platforms has become essential for improving accessibility, especially for individuals with limited mobility or those living in remote areas. Given the growing prevalence of telehealth, it is crucial to examine its current applications in arts therapies for older adults with ND.

Materials and Methods

Our review aimed to map the existing literature and provide a comprehensive overview of telehealth in arts therapies for individuals with ND. A scoping review methodology was employed, adhering to PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021) and the six-step framework proposed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005). In March 2024, systematic searches were conducted across six databases: PubMed, Scopus, ProQuest, Science Direct, Taylor & Francis, and Web of Science resulting in 2,888 articles for screening.

Results

A total of 17 studies published between 2009 and 2024 were analyzed, with 82% conducted post-2020, reflecting a surge in telehealth adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic. Eight studies specifically focused on older adults, addressing dementia, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and mild cognitive impairment. These studies involved over 200 participants and investigated various telehealth-based arts therapy modalities. Music therapy sessions for older adults with ND often involved the participation of a spouse or care partner and were delivered in both individual and group formats. Expressive arts therapy positively impacted spontaneous brain activity and neural network connectivity.

Conclusions

The reviewed studies demonstrate significant benefits, including enhanced emotional well-being, improved cognitive function, and strengthened social connectivity. These findings emphasize the potential of telehealth to overcome geographical and physical barriers, expanding the accessibility of effective therapeutic interventions for older adults with ND.

Determinants of Digital Music Engagement in Older Adults

Poster

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Objectives*

Unprecedented global population aging highlights the necessity of addressing the emotional well-being of older adults. With the increasing adoption of digital technologies within this demographic, innovative pathways are emerging to enhance emotional well-being, with music standing out as a promising medium. While the evidence-based benefits of music therapy in fostering emotional well-being are well-documented, the factors that enable and facilitate digital music engagement among older adults remain underexplored. This study aimed to identify the determinants of digital music engagement in older adults.

Materials and Methods

A mixed-methods research design was employed across three stages. In Stage 1, qualitative interviews were conducted with older adults (N = 8) to explore their music preferences, purposes, and patterns of music use. Stage 2 involved interviews with music therapists (N = 6) to provide professional insights into older adults' music engagement and to assess the feasibility of adapting such engagement for digital interventions. Based on findings from Stages 1 and 2, an online survey was developed and piloted in Stage 3. The survey was reviewed by an expert group of music therapists (N = 12) to evaluate the relevance and validity of proposed determinants.

Results

The study identified 74 determinants of digital music engagement in older adults. A content validity index (CVI ≥ 0.7) was used as the benchmark for determinant acceptance. The identified determinants were categorized into ten thematic scales including music preferences, personalized music selection, music genres, purposes of music use, types of musical activities, musical activities outside the intervention, empowering and guidance, participants' interaction, technical solutions, and risks and limitations.

Conclusions

This study provided and categorized an initial list of determinants for older adults' digital music engagement. However, further research with an international sample of music therapists is recommended to gain more insights of how to address older adults' emotional well-being in digital music-based interventions.

Exploring Arts Therapists' Competency in Digital Mental Healthcare

Poster

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Objectives*

Arts therapy is increasingly recognized for its effectiveness in mental healthcare, addressing a diverse range of mental health challenges and promoting overall well-being. With the rapid digitalization of healthcare, digital solutions are becoming integral to mental health services and are steadily gaining traction within arts therapy as well. The integration of digital technology into healthcare necessitates skilled professionals, making digital competency a central focus of research in recent years. However, digital competency within arts therapy remains underexplored. Building on advancements in digital competency frameworks in healthcare, this study aims to address this gap by identifying the competencies necessary for arts therapists to deliver digital mental healthcare and defining the relevant domains of digital competency.

Materials and Methods

A scoping review was conducted following the PRISMA-ScR guidelines. A systematic search was performed across the PubMed, Scopus, and ProQuest databases to identify articles addressing arts therapists' digital competency in mental healthcare for adult populations.

Results

From a total of 2,522 articles screened, 115 studies were selected for inclusion in the scoping review. These studies primarily discussed digital competency in arts therapy, focusing on anxiety, depression, facilitation of emotional expression, and cognitive enhancement. The findings revealed 286 digital competencies spanning all areas of arts therapy, including 127 (43%) in music therapy, 99 (34%) in visual art therapy, and 18 (6%) each in drama therapy and dance/movement therapy. A total of 13 digital competency domains was identified, with four domains utilized across all areas of arts therapy. The most common domains were remote care (74 out of 115 studies, 64%), patient-centred applications and education (74 studies, 64%), clinical care (65 studies, 57%), and data analysis (27 studies, 23%).

Conclusions

The competencies and domains identified in this study provide a foundation for developing a comprehensive competency framework for delivering digital mental healthcare in arts therapy.

Initial Version of the Oppositional Defiant and Dissocial Behaviour Scales for Adolescents in Latvia

Poster

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Objectives*

A robust qualitative assessment tool is crucial for the early identification of adolescent emotional and behavioral difficulties (World Health Organization, 2020). This research is being conducted within the framework of the National Research Program project “Development of a new computer-based assessment method for measuring and monitoring adolescent mental health outcomes in post-COVID pandemic conditions” (No. 1-PB-2/8/2024) and focuses on the development of Oppositional Defiant and Dissocial Behaviour scales.

Materials and Methods

An initial pool of items, based on ICD-11 criteria for oppositional defiant and disruptive behavior disorders. An iterative process was used to assess Content validity of the items. Specifically, six experts rated the relevance and clarity of the items using a Likert scale. Following expert feedback, items were refined, rephrased, and augmented and were re-evaluated, and finally Content validity index for each item was assessed.

To assess face validity, 200 adolescents aged 13 to 19 completed initial versions of the scales and evaluated the apparent relevance and comprehensibility of the items using a Likert scale. The purpose of this evaluation was to ensure that the items were appropriate for the target population. Based on the results, the items were further refined. Parental and participants informed consent was obtained for adolescent participation, adhering to ethical guidelines of Rīga Stradiņš University Ethics Committee.

Results

The best items were selected based on the reaction and discrimination indexes and based on the results of the exploratory factor analysis, final versions of the scales were developed. All scales show satisfactory to very good internal consistency based on Cronbach’s alpha and McDonald’s omega indexes.

Conclusions

The scale with the strongest psychometric properties was integrated into a comprehensive assessment tool for emotional and behavioral difficulties. Future research should focus on evaluating convergent and criterion-related validity of the Oppositional Defiant and Dissocial Behavior Scales.

Relaxation through Music with Binaural Beats: Developing an Intervention Prototype

Poster

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Objectives*

Binaural beats (BB) have become a relevant topic in different health sciences within recent decades. Several research papers emphasise the need for specially composed music in which BB is embedded. The objective of this research is to develop a prototype of a binaural beats music intervention and test its effects on psychophysiological responses - electrodermal activity (EDA) and heart frequency (HF) during relaxation as well as self-evaluation.

Materials and Methods

16 participants were involved in a pilot study (n=16): 75% women (n=12), 25 % men (n=4); age 18 - 33 (M = 25, SD = 4,8). Participants completed stress-inducing reaction tests, followed by listening to therapeutic musical pieces designed to promote relaxation in a crossover experiment. One of the music pieces included binaural beats, while the other did not contain these beats (n-BB music). EDA and HF were recorded throughout the experiment. The participants as well completed self evaluation in Osgood's semantic differential scale.

Results

According to *paired samples t test* the mean difference in EDA for BB music was greater at 2.55 (SD = 0.897) compared to 2.4875 (SD = 0.861) for n-BB music. However, the difference between BB and n-BB was not significant, $p = 0.407 > 0.05$. Mean difference in HF for BB music was greater at 19.5 (SD = 7.248) compared to 16.4375 (SD = 6.772) for n-BB music. The difference between BB and n-BB was significant, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. Self-evaluation did not show statistically significant impact of Music with BB.

Conclusions

Binaural beats music significantly affects heart rate variability, suggesting its potential in relaxation and therapeutic use. While no significant impact was found on EDA, the findings support BB music's feasibility for therapy. The developed prototype provides a foundation for further research and practical applications in receptive music therapy.

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Rīga Stradiņš University 10th International Multidisciplinary Research Conference
“Society. Health. Welfare”, 26–28 March 2025:
Abstracts. Rīga: RSU, i–xv p., 237 p., including Author Index.
<https://doi.org/10.25143/rw2025.shw.abstracts-book>

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16 Dzirciema Street, Rīga, LV 1007

ISBN 978-9934-618-69-7 (electronic)