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Objective: The Forward with Dementia (FWD) project is a dementia awareness campaign that was implemented across five countries. The campaign included components such as websites (in four languages – www.forwardwithdementia.org), webinars, newsletters, and social media posts. This campaign is the fourth phase of a three-year longitudinal mixed methods study with five phases in five countries: Canada (New Brunswick, Ontario, Quebec), Australia, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and Poland. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the implementation and perceived impact of the FWD websites and campaign in the five participating countries.

Methods: The RE-AIM framework (Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance) was used to guide the campaign evaluation. The evaluation was drawn from Google Analytics, surveys, individual interviews, and report cards. Data collection occurred between September 2021 and May 2022.

Results: There were approximately 124,945 page views across all FWD websites during the campaign. Participants of the surveys and interviews reported engaging in a range of campaign activities. They read information about receiving a diagnosis, stories from persons with lived experience in dementia, news, and attended webinars (or watched recording). Most participants rated the information that they read on the website moderately, very, or extremely helpful. In addition, the majority of respondents said that they plan to visit the website again. During the interviews, participants shared that the website was easy to navigate, practical, and that it maintains a positive tone related to dementia. The co-design aspect of the campaign was considered a strength.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that the FWD campaign can provide support for people who have recently received a dementia diagnosis and their family or friends. In addition, the campaign may provide health and social care providers with a new source of information and tools to use and share with their clients. These results informed the development of a playbook to guide regions and countries beyond those involved in this project to implement similar initiatives.

S6: Adapting and implementing WHO iSupport among dementia caregivers worldwide: users' perspectives and future development (Session I)

Symposium Overview:

The WHO Global Action Plan against Dementia calls for “at least 75% of member states providing carer support and training by 2025”. In response to the global target, WHO has developed iSupport aiming to provide support for caregivers of people living with dementia. The generic WHO iSupport has been translated and adapted in 39 countries and 37 languages so far. The adapted versions of WHO iSupport are now being implemented worldwide, usually as an online program for caregivers. The feasibility, accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability of the iSupport program in different cultural context is now being explored extensively. This symposium aims to share the up-to-date research findings and lessons learned on the adaptation and implementation process and users’ perspectives from diverse cultural background. It will include seven presentation and be divided into sessions: 3 presentations on Session I and 4 presentations on Session II.

Session I: The first presentation will be dedicated to overviewing the development and the progress of adaptation and implementation of WHO iSupport. The second presentation will focus on the adaptation of iSupport in Uganda. The presentation will inform the utility of iSupport in Sub-Sahara Africa. Based on individual semi-structural interview data from Tunisia, the third presentation will highlight that caregivers' experience and needs are valuable for cultural adaptation of iSupport.

Session II: The first presentation will demonstrate how facilitator-enabled iSupport intervention would change the interaction and engagement in learning among Chinese caregivers living in Australia and Greater China. The second presentation will focus on adapting iSupport in Switzerland using a community-based participatory approach. The third presentation will show the potential benefit of raising awareness of the Russian society about dementia after the implementation of iSupport through digital technologies. The fourth presentation will report on the co-design of an adapted version of iSupport for young caregivers.

The symposium is expected to inform further development, improvement and implementation of WHO iSupport for diverse cultural background. This will be not only valuable information for participants who are interested in iSupport but also for those (interested in) investigating interventions developed in another cultural setting.

iSupport: the online support program for caregivers of people with dementia

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Objective: In this first presentation, we will present iSupport, WHO's skills training and support program for caregivers of people living with dementia, and summarize the theoretical and empirical background for its development and cultural specific adaptations, and the lessons learned so far. WHO iSupport consists of 23 sessions in total, covering five modules: (a) what is dementia (one session); (b) being a carer (four sessions); (c) caring for me (three sessions); (d) providing everyday care (five sessions) and (e) dealing with changing behaviour (ten sessions).

Methods: The overview that we will present in this session will be based on the fast growing evidence on the adaptation and implementation of iSupport described in the scientific literature.

Results: First steps have been undertaken to translate and adapt WHO iSupport systematically and culturally fair for several countries and specific target groups and first studies on the impact have been carried out. Published results from India, Portugal, Australia and Brazil will be summarized, also discussing some experienced barriers for implementation related to the way the intervention is provided and implemented, also related to cultural issues.

Conclusion: The scaling of programs like WHO iSupport remains challenging. Ongoing research shows that interventions for caregivers of people living with dementia especially in LMICs such as India require further consideration. However, low uptake and adherence help us better understand which barriers caregivers face and how future research might tailor iSupport and other online programs better to carers' needs.

Support and training programmes such as iSupport, are more important than ever in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. They present a real opportunity to help to reach the global target set by WHO that 75% of countries will provide support and training programmes for caregivers of people living with dementia by 2025.