



## Continuous Monitoring of Medication Overuse Headache in Europe and Latin America:

Development and STandardization of an Alert and decision support System



### Editorial



Health care for those suffering from chronic diseases requires a flexible and accurate communication and monitoring system, to enable health teams to know and control the main variables that affect the clinical condition of patients. Under these assumptions, **COMOESTAS**, acronym for the project

“**CO**n tinuous **MO**nitoring of Medication Overuse Headache (MOH) in **E**urope and Latin America: development and **ST**andardization of an **A**lert and decision support **S**ystem”, has emerged.

COMOESTAS is funded by the European Commission within a call on a new application of **advanced Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Risk Assessment and Patient Safety**. It aims at granting the delivery of a better healthcare quality to MOH patients and improving cost-effectiveness in this specific field.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), **the Medication Overuse Headache (MOH) affects more than 3% of worldwide adults and 1% of children and adolescents\***. This chronic disorder occurs in susceptible people who, seeking to relieve migraines and/or tension type headaches, abuse of symptomatic drugs (ergotamine, analgesics, opioids, triptans, combination). **MOH** also represents a more common and disabling condition, which markedly exposes patients to the risks of drug side-effects and co-morbid situations.

**MOH** is curable, but its outcome is hampered by a high risk of relapse (up to 45%). However, there is now evidence that a health care approach based on the building of a strong doctor-patient alliance, which takes into consideration both the medical and the psychological needs of patients,



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may have positive influence on the outcomes. To achieve this, **COMOESTAS** has developed an **Interactive Electronic Patient Record (IEPR)**, an advanced “all-in-one” solution that integrates the traditional paper headache diaries and calendars into an innovative **ICT** tool, taking into account the complex issues that accompany this peculiar form of headache. Thanks to the **IEPR**, it is possible to follow patients from the diagnosis, support the physician in managing the therapy and promote continuous interaction between physician and patients, thus making the patient a key node in the entire process.

COMOESTAS aims at improving the quality and efficiency of the healthcare services delivered to MOH’s patients, through the following specific objectives:

1. Developing a fully operational IEPR-based system that supports all actors involved in MOH management (patients and physicians), all devices (PDA, Tablet, PC, smartphone) and communication technologies (UMTS, Wi-Fi, TCP/IP).
2. Favouring the uptaking of EU standars.
3. Improving the quality and efficiency of healthcare systems by means of continuous monitoring of patients needs/problems, communication between patients and physicians and personalization of care.
4. Increasing patient safety by optimising medical interventions, preventing errors (early detection of alert signals that might represent possible side effects or the prelude to the worsening or relapse of the disease or to the appearance of co-morbid conditions) and reducing drug-induced side effects Reducing the burden of disease via the control of attacks, both in terms of intensity and frequency, and consumed symptomatic drugs and improving the patient’s quality of life.
5. Reducing direct (consultations, hospitalizations, etc.) and indirect (i.e. linked to the disability and complications caused by the disease) costs provoked by the condition.



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This first newsletter will introduce the project and its members, with a detailed report about the prevalence of the disease, and a summary of the activities up to date. The four remaining issues, will provide news about other aspects of MOH, the foreseen impact of the information and communication technologies' adoption in chronic diseases, and the project's progress. We are sure that **COMOESTAS** represents a new health care approach to chronic diseases. Let's walk this way together.

\* WHO, EFH: The Journal of Headache and Pain, Vol. 8, sup. 1, oct. 2007.

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