

THE PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION STRATEGY OF THE SPANISH NHS

Within the framework of chronicity addressing in
the NHS

Executive Summary

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Strategy approved by the Inter-territorial
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GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR
HEALTH AND CONSUMPTION

DIRECTORATE GENERAL
FOR PUBLIC HEALTH,
QUALITY AND INNOVATION

THE PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION STRATEGY OF THE SPANISH NHS

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Declaration of interest:

All participants have signed a declaration of interest through a specific and pre-designed model and process. No one has any conflict of interest related to the field of action for this Strategy.

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Executive summary

The Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy of the Spanish NHS proposes the progressive development of interventions aimed at improving health and preventing diseases, injuries and disability. It is an initiative developed within the framework of the Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Addressing Chronicity in the Spanish National Health System (NHS).

Spain has achieved one of the highest life expectancy rates in the world (82.1 years) however other countries in the region are ahead in terms of healthy life expectancy (in Spain, 61.5 years old among men and 59.4 years old among women).

Since the last century, modern societies are facing two interrelated challenges, the demographic and the epidemiological transitions. This means a change from the communicable diseases to non-communicable diseases, as the life expectancy rises in the population. Chronic health conditions stand for 86% of deaths and 77% of the disease burden in the WHO European region. They are the main cause of preventable mortality and morbidity. Even if mortality due to these diseases has a progressive decline, their disease burden is on the rise. In Spain, they stand for 89.2% of the total disease burden measured in disability-adjusted life year (DALY).

The major causes for the burden of disease, both at a global level and in our environment, have common determinants and risk factors; tackling them in an integral way improves the impact of the actions for promotion and prevention as well as their efficiency.

Strategies to improve health and prevent diseases are based on effectiveness and five other important approaches, needed to achieve the best results: a life-course approach, employing specific approaches for specific environments, a population approach, a positive approach and comprehensive approach.

Vision

The vision of this Strategy is to promote a society where individuals, families and communities are able to achieve their maximum potential regarding development, health, wellbeing and autonomy, and where working for health is assumed as a task shared by everyone.

Mission

Facilitating a common framework for health promotion and primary prevention in the course of life, harmonising its integration in the portfolio of services of the National Health System and getting other sectors of society actively involved, promoting participation of individuals and population in order to raise their autonomy and capacity to have a greater control over their own health.

General objective

The general objective is to promote the populations' health and wellbeing by fostering healthy environments and lifestyles and strengthening safety in order to prevent injuries.

Increasing life expectancy in good health by two years, for those born in Spain has been set out as a quantifiable global objective for 2020.

This Strategy represents an opportunity to integrate and coordinate the efforts for health promotion and prevention among all levels, sectors and actors involved. It also means a new driver in the re-orientation of the National Health System, which is a demand of our environment and a recommendation that has been repeated by international organisations such as the WHO and the European Union. Health is a high priority for society and it requires a joint response, coordinated and integrated by effective interventions and maintained over time.

Strategic lines

Strategic lines tackled are: Strengthening public health, territorial coordination and governance, health equity, re-orientation of health services, intersectorality in health, health empowerment, healthy and safe environments and community participation and action.

A Three-dimensional course of action

This Strategy is developed in a three-dimensional course of action: by populations, environments and factor to address.

In the first stage, two **populations** have been prioritised for action: children (younger than 15) and those aged 50 years and older.

In the interventions addressed to prevention and health promotion , it is important to act in an inclusive way. Not only addressing the main health/risk factors and their interactions all together, but also the different life **environments** of each population. Therefore, for the population aged younger than 15, the priority environments for intervention that have been identified, in addition to the healthcare, are education and community. In the population aged over 50 years, the healthcare and community environments are addressed.

The **factors** addressed in this Strategy are the most important in tackling chronicity: healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco consumption and hazardous drinking, in addition to emotional wellbeing and a safe environment for preventing non-intentional injuries.

Specific Objectives

In the first stage of this Strategy, the specific objectives are:

1. To encourage healthy life-styles, as well as safe environments and behaviours, among children. That through the coordination of comprehensive interventions in the health care, family, community and education fields.
2. To promote healthy life-styles during pregnancy and breast-feeding.
3. Encourage emotional wellbeing among children.

4. To promote active and healthy aging in the population aged 50 years old, through the comprehensive intervention on healthy life-styles and safe environments and behaviours, in a coordinated manner between healthcare and family-community fields.
5. Prevent functional decline and promote health and emotional wellbeing in the population aged over 70 years old, fostering the coordination of comprehensive interventions in the health care, social services and community fields.

Methodology

For the elaboration of this Strategy, a participative methodology has been employed, based on the implication of the professional sectors related to health as well as the health care administrations at both a national and regional level. The starting point was the identification of good practices in health promotion and primary prevention, established in the Autonomous Communities. A rigorous process of evaluation, prioritisation and integration, based on its importance and feasibility, allowed us to identify the best available practices to be universalised throughout the entire NHS.

Selected interventions for action

The interventions are:

- Comprehensive counselling about life styles in Primary Healthcare, linked to community resources in child population
- Comprehensive counselling about life styles during pregnancy and breast-feeding
- Positive parenthood programme, for promoting emotional wellbeing among the child population
- Comprehensive counselling about life styles in Primary Healthcare, linked to community resources in the adult population.
- Frailty screening and preventive intervention for the elderly, which will lead to individualised plans, that in line with the action plans by the European Innovation Partnership for Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP-AHA).

Hence, within this Strategy, progress will be made in comprehensive health interventions. Primary prevention and health promotion interventions will be reinforced. These interventions will be strengthened in Primary Healthcare on a global basis. Community interventions and their coordination within different environments (healthcare, social, education and community fields) will be fostered. All of these always on the basis of the guiding principles of integrity, scientific evidence, cohesion, participation, evaluation, health in all policies and equity.

Implementation

Throughout the process of the effective implementation of the Strategy, it is planned:

- The operational development of comprehensive interventions that will go into detail in the common and replicable aspects related to the best identified practices. That will ease their globalisation and help promote an effective coordination among the Public Health and Primary Healthcare structures, to ensure equity in their implementation.

- The design of professional capacity-building program focused on the methodology of change and the education on healthy life styles, which include brief counselling, intensive individual/group education and community education. The program will be based fundamentally on on-line learning methodology.
- The capacity-building of the population through the design of a web platform on healthy life styles.
- The creation of partnerships, which includes a Plan for local development for which bilateral work has already been put in place. One of the key elements of this Plan will be the creation of on-line maps bringing together community resources for prevention and health promotion at a local level. In relation to the joint work in the education environment, the aim is to universally reinforce interventions in a harmonised way in two specific fields: Physical activity and healthy eating, and emotional health and wellbeing. It also includes joint work with the sports sectors in two lines of action: the operational development of training programmes for physical activity for health, aimed at healthcare, education and community professionals; and support for all those interventions in the strategy using physical activity as an instrument to improve health.

The action among sectors allowing the strengthening of public health and the guiding principle "health in all policies" will be fostered through an Intersectoral Committee composed of representatives of different institutions from the central state administration.

In this re-orientation towards prevention and health promotion, the information systems and the promotion of research as well as the transfer of its results, will have an important role.

In the current social and economical context, where the social and health systems are being strained, a shift towards prevention and health promotion is mandatory. This will provide a double benefit: to increase wellbeing and social cohesion, and to work on the system's sustainability in the medium and long term. This Strategy is proposed as an instrument in the achievement of this goal.