

The SPEX project objective is to evaluate the impact of the creation of a health specialist Network of Excellence linking a tertiary hospital (Centre of Excellence – CoE) to Points of Care (PoCs) (either specialist outpatient clinics or general hospitals) across the territory. The relationship between CoE and PoCs guarantees to patients the best clinical practices together with direct access to highly specialised diagnosis and treatment.

Some or all of the following services will support the Networks of Excellence:

Clinical Services

- Teleconsultation: the technological platform facilitates the relationship between PoC and CoE in order to cope with the most complex cases.
- Second opinion: the PoCs' patients can get a second opinion from the CoE specialists.
- Integrated Care Pathways: the CoE provides updated guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of patients.

Professional Services:

- The CoE will support the PoC in increasing its skills through an excellence accreditation process, periodical site visits, performance evaluation, professional training and ECM credits.
- The CoE will provide information packs for patients according to their pathology.

Marketing Services:

- The CoE will support the organisation of meetings as well as the development and implementation of new services

Coordinator:

- Centro CARDIOLOGICO Monzino - Italy

Partners:

- BIOS - Italy
- Centro Diagnostico Plinio – Italy
- Consorci Hospitalari de Vic – Spain
- County Council of Uppsala – Sweden
- Eskilstuna Hospital – Sweden
- Health Information Management – Belgium
- Hospital Clinic i Provincial de Barcelona – Spain
- SYSteam Udac AB – Sweden
- TB – Solutions – Spain
- Telemedicina Rizzoli – Italy
- University of Uppsala – Sweden

Other Participants:

- ANISAP - Italy
- National Hospital - Kyrgyzstan
- Poliambulatorio Le Ville

Contact Details:

Dr. Lorenzo Cammelli
Centro CARDIOLOGICO Monzino
Via C. Parea 4
20138 Milan
Tel.: 0039 02 580021
e-mail: lorenzo.cammelli@ccfm.it

Supported by European Commission
under the eTEN – eHealth Programme



Project WEB site address:
<http://www.spex-project.net/>

Swedish Pilot Site

The Swedish trial focused on plastic surgery, specifically burns, chronic ulcers and pressure sores. Experts in this clinical area at University Hospital of Uppsala (Centre of Excellence) are spreading their knowledge to surgeons at Eskilstuna Hospital and the National Hospital in Kyrgyzstan (Points of Care).

SPEX leads to greater dissemination of knowledge, leading to more efficient decisions which can shorten treatment time for this group of patients. This benefits not only the patient, but it is also a major advantage to society. The method being used to spread excellence is problem-based with individual patients as instruments and examples. Many patients with chronic ulcers and burns demand resources from healthcare for a period of several years, or even for life. Using the SPEX service, a patient in Eskilstuna can be treated in a shorter time and with lower costs than before.

Tele-consultations between doctors during a patient visit are done by using video-conferencing. The responses from patients have been positive. In fact many patients feel very comfortable with less travelling between hospitals when the treatment can be carried out closer to home.



Spanish pilot Site

Hospital Clínic de Barcelona (HCB - Centre of Excellence) and Hospital General de Vic (HGV - Point of Care) share a common vision in the development of new models of care based on cooperation among professionals and institutions. The ultimate goal is to achieve better standards in healthcare delivery.

Management of cardiac conditions illustrates a typical demanding scenario that prompts for collaboration across levels of care: Disease diagnosis and treatment are usually carried out at HGV, but the progressive nature of the illness will eventually require the intervention of highly specialised techniques that are only available at HCB. Finding operational alternatives that could better balance the transition across these two levels of care will yield significant benefits for patients, professionals and policy makers.

The SPEX pilot demonstrates to the different stakeholders the opportunities opened by this approach. The trial addresses patients with advanced congestive heart failure that are candidates for the heart transplant programme or other types of cardiac surgery. Some elements of the procedure to manage these patients at the tertiary hospital (HCB) are transferred to HGV, with the objective of better allocating the core clinical competences available in both centres. Globally, this reduces the healthcare carried out at HCB and increase the level of service provided at HGV. This is based on setting up a collaborative environment that supports and facilitates communication among professionals.

This original collaborative paradigm is being extended to other scenarios, specifically in a model of cooperation between primary care and HGV in performing spirometry, where the hospital assumes a role in education and quality assurance that guarantees the correctness of the test and its clinical application.

Italian Pilot Site

The Italian trial focused on the implementation of a cardiovascular Network of Excellence linked with Points of Care (PoCs) spread all over Italy.

The Centro CARDIOLOGICO Monzino (CCM) of Milan is the Centre of Excellence (CoE). CCM is a highly specialised cardiovascular teaching hospital with a research activity both for basic and applied biosciences, awarded the title of "Istituto di Ricovero e Cura a Carattere Scientifico" (IRCCS) by the Italian Healthcare Authority. The PoCs are represented by specialised cardiovascular outpatient clinics located far from CCM; the relationship between PoCs and CoE is one of specialist professional accreditation. Their interconnections are facilitated by an ICT infrastructure allowing transfer of both clinical data and images, teleconferences, e-learning classes and access to the CCM booking system.

The advantages of the SPEX model are:

- 1) Spreading CCM's expert cardiovascular clinical knowledge across the country increases its catchment area as well as the peripheral filtering of tertiary cases.
- 2) Improving the clinical competence of PoCs, giving them third level support for complex cases in a highly specialised environment.
- 3) Ensuring a high level of cardiovascular medicine, with a local follow-up fulfilling the highest standards. This reduces both the need for admissions to CoE, and the difficulties in accessing distant services.

During the trial, two PoCs received SPEX accreditation: BIOS (Rome) and Centro Diagnostico Plinio (Ercolano, Naples). The PoCs adopted the Profiles of Care of CCM, sending to CCM only the most complex patients and thus acting as an outpatient filter. The patients benefited either from direct or indirect consultation at CCM for third level cases as needed without delay.