



Welcome

to the eMEN summer newsletter, updating you on our progress and achievements in e-mental health technologies across Europe.

What has happened so far?

Piloting new products:

As part of the eMEN project, each partner country is piloting an e-mental health product. This summer's newsletter highlights some of the innovative approaches developing from these pilots, including how they are addressing barriers to the uptake of e-mental health. Read more about the [experiences of the German Moodbuster roadshow](#).

Influencing policy and practice:

Combined expertise across the eMEN partners has supported our policy work, illustrated below by [the German draft law for the "Digital Health Care Act"](#) and the [promotion of safer \(mental\) health information exchange in the Netherlands by using international medical standards](#).

Knowledge Sharing & Exchange:

We have also been sharing knowledge about policy and research in new ways, through [cross-disciplinary events](#) like the [Belgian seminar](#) focussing on Return on Investment, the [Irish seminar](#) on technology and student mental health and the [Cardiff seminar](#) on the increasing access and equity of digital mental health in Cardiff, Wales.

Knowledge-sharing events are being hosted by eMEN partners throughout the project, so if you missed out on the events above, there is still time to attend [one of our upcoming seminars or conferences](#). They are all free to attend!

Recent eMEN events

Technology and mental health: a good ROI?

The 4th Belgian seminar was held in Leuven (BE) and focused on “Technology and Health: a good Return on Investment (ROI)?”. During the opening of the seminar, the Federal Minister of Public Health, Maggie De Block emphasized the importance of a good integration of eHealth in the healthcare system. She elaborated on the various e-health initiatives that have been rolled out in recent years and was also very positive about how the eMEN project is contributing to the further upscaling of e-(mental) health.

Next, an interesting line-up of speakers shared their experience on the Return on Investment (ROI) of eMental Health products.



The first keynote, Dirk Antonissen (Pulso Europe) spoke frankly about the difficulties to make a revenue with e-mental health products from the perspective of a social profit organisation, providing services and tools in e-mental health.



Charlotte Van den Broucke (Pulso Europe) subsequently presented one of the Pulso tools “Studying Without Worries” (“Studeren zonder blokkeren”), an online program which offers students a wide range of guidance during their studies.

The second keynote, Eric Van der Hulst provided an overview on health tech innovations developed by Imec. He also discussed current healthcare challenges and how technology or mobile health could be of added value for the “mobile generation”.

After these two keynotes some case studies were presented: The Balance tool (a stress self-assessment tool) and how it was used in the Belgian supermarket chain, Delhaize, presented by Eddie De Block. Next, Koen Dewit (Zenjoy) showed us why design matters in branding and designing apps and tools. Pamela Loges (Ideas from Europe) presented the “Generation Z” and their own mental health, and solutions to empower it. Finally, a Belgian publisher (Lannoo) demonstrated how they also invest in interactive products in mental healthcare. In this case, Memory Palace, was presented by Lannoo author Kasper Bormans. Memory palace gives memories a place for people with dementia in a unique way to improve contact with people with dementia.



The program was closed by a short panel discussion. All presenters further discussed ROI and concluded that such a commercial focus is often outside of the comfort zone of mental healthcare (professionals). Nonetheless it is an important aspect of any mental healthcare service and we should certainly be mindful of this in the future.

Technology and Student Mental Health Seminar

On June 18th, Mental Health Reform and the Union of Students of Ireland hosted an international seminar on Technology and Student Mental Health. The event was held at Technological University Dublin, Grangegorman Campus.

The seminar addressed the potential offered by technology-supported applications (eMental Health) in student mental health services and supports. It covered a range of themes, including some existing examples of eMental Health as part of core student mental health services, innovation in third level settings, cross-campus initiatives and eMental Health courses.

The event has attracted a range of national and international expert speakers and over 100 participants. Among the keynote speakers were: Prof. Heleen Riper from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, who presented on: *eMental Health, beyond state of the art & the Caring Universities project*; Dr Derek Richards from SilverCloud Health and Trinity College Dublin, who talked about *Developments in eMental Health for students*

and Prof. Jacques van Lankveld from Open University, The Netherlands, who presented on eMental Health courses for students.

The seminar also covered some examples of usage of technology in student mental health services in Ireland, including Trinity College Dublin Counselling Service, Dublin City University and Participate Social Anxiety Programme of National University of Ireland, Galway.

The last session focused on presentations from students on how they have developed technology and successfully integrated it into their campaigns. This was followed by a student leader panel, discussing the use of technology in improving students' mental health.



[Visit the eMEN website for the full article](#)

Wales well-placed to incorporate digital technology into mental health care

On July 4th 2019, the Mental Health Foundation, the UK partner in the eMEN project, organised a seminar Digital Mental Health: Increasing Access and Equity in Cardiff, Wales. The seminar was organised in collaboration with the Public Health Wales 1000 Lives Mental Health and Learning Disability team. Carol Shillabeer, CEO Powys teaching Health Board, opened the day. Delegates were informed that Wales is well placed to incorporate digital technology into mental health care and that digital technology can play a key role in mental healthcare.

Expert presentations focussed on recent developments in digital mental health and explored how such evidence-based technologies can offer innovative and increased access to high-quality mental health care, including for groups with a higher risk of developing mental health problems, and those living further away from more traditional service provision. It will also explore issues of the effectiveness and accessibility of digital mental health technologies.



Addressing the issue of quality of mental health apps, Helen Northmore, Programme Manager, Digital Health Ecosystem Wales, reported that NICE has launched an evidence standards framework for digital health technologies and

Health Technology Wales and the Digital Health Ecosystem are looking at how it can be used in Wales. Professor Ricardo Araya, Professor of Global Mental Health and academic lead of the Global Mental Health Research Group, King's College London, spoke about the recent progress and challenges in Global eMental Health. With the rapidly growing 'industry' of digital solutions to help reduce the treatment gap in mental health, most of these digital solutions have never been tested or evaluated in a rigorous way.

In the late morning session, Shari McDaid spoke on behalf of Rebecca Cotton, Director of Policy at the Mental Health Network, who recently completed a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship. There Rebecca learned about how digital technology is being used to improve mental health in Australia and the USA. Professor Chris Williams, Emeritus Professor of Psychosocial Psychiatry at the University of Glasgow, spoke about how blended learning approaches offer benefits over online alone. Professor Williams referred to the solution of combining digital, book and class approaches. Dr Paul Best, lecturer in Social Work at Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and BABCP registered Cognitive Behavioural Therapist, spoke about the accessibility and acceptability of online technologies to support mental health and well-being within a Northern Irish context.

In the afternoon session, Dr Jacinta Tan, a child and adolescent psychiatrist and medical ethicist, and Professor Alka Ahuja, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and the Lead Consultant for the Tertiary Neurodevelopmental service at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, delivered a workshop which focused on how to collaborate and partner with other agencies on technological mental healthcare innovations. This was followed by a Tabletop discussion where delegates could discuss and propose answers to key questions regarding the integration of digital mental health from three perspectives: service users, practitioners, organisations (e.g., the advantages and disadvantages of using digital mental health tools in assessments? in interventions? Concerns about digital technology in this field?



how to establish an evidenced base for digital technology?). The session was closed with a question and answer feedback session between delegates and speakers.

Chair speakers included Dr Antonis Kousoulis, Director of Policy & Research at the Mental Health Foundation, Andrea Gray, Mental Health Development Lead at 1000 Lives Improvement in Public Health Wales and Simon Mudie, Experts by Experience Involvement Consultant representative.

During the breaks, SMEs and App developers had the opportunity to showcase their product.

[Read the full article here](#)

Digital innovation: trying to do things in a new way with the use of technology
Interview with Helen Northmore by Marleen Swenne

One of the speakers at the Cardiff seminar, 'Digital Mental Health: Increasing access and equity', was Helen Northmore. Helen is Programme Manager, Digital Health Ecosystem Wales and her task is building a network that improves developing digital healthcare. Main goal is to bring all the parties that are involved together: industry, social care, experienced users, IT-people. I wanted to interview her about the theme of the seminar and also because I thought she knew a lot about the e-mental health users' perspective, but that was not quite correct...

[Read the full interview here](#)



Interesting Developments

Acceptance and benefits of internet-based interventions in inpatient settings – experiences of German Moodbuster roadshow

The interest in e-mental health is increasing, not least because of projects such as eMEN. With increased interest comes the possibility to explore new and previously neglected areas for application. Though internet-based interventions have acquired a solid evidence base in a variety of settings, especially when provided with some form of human support, little is known about their application in inpatient contexts. That is why researchers from the eMEN project have conducted a workshop on the acceptance and benefits of internet-based interventions in 10 mental health institutions all across Germany: Schleswig-Holstein, Berlin, Brandenburg, North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria. Participants ranged from senior to junior physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, and even to occupational therapists. They received a live introduction to Moodbuster, an internet-based treatment for depression, and had the opportunity to work hands on with the program. Moreover, they completed questionnaires on the usability and acceptance as well as on advantages and disadvantages of internet-based interventions in inpatient settings. Each workshop was concluded by a group discussion. In these discussions, the researchers gathered

information on the essential intervention components that staff members require in order to use an internet-based intervention. Finally, barriers to implementation, as well as chances and risks associated with internet-based interventions were discussed.

The results of the questionnaires will be analysed in the upcoming months. However, a few trends emerged during the discussions. Generally, most participants were enthusiastic about the use of internet-based interventions, such as Moodbuster, in ambulant settings. They were more reluctant however to provide a full intervention online to their inpatients. Staff feared the reduction of already limited contact hours with their patients. Despite this reservation, certain components, such as a psychoeducation module, were deemed beneficial. An often-mentioned application was bridging the time between face-to-face sessions.

Unfortunately, the largest barrier to implementation from a technical perspective was the lack of infrastructure. Almost none of the 10 institutions regarded their WIFI connection or availability of computer workspaces as sufficient for implementing an internet-based intervention. Finally, privacy and data safety remained a concern.

[Visit the eMEN website for the online article](#)



The German health care system is moving towards digitalisation

In Mid-May 2019 the German Federal Health Minister presented a draft law for the "Digital Health Care Act (Digitale Versorgung-Gesetz – DVG)". By German standards, it contains almost spectacular new regulations, as it provides, among other things, for insured persons to be entitled to digital health applications ("diGA"). Digital health applications might soon be prescribed by doctors and might gain access to the primary healthcare market.

At request of the provider, the application would be audited by the Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices (BfArM) for compliance with all legal requirements, data protection and data security as well as for positive healthcare effects and then would be included in the directory of reimbursable digital health applications.

To be listed reimbursable, the "diGA" must be a medical device with a low risk class, i.e. risk class I or IIa according to the Medical Devices Regulation. Stand-alone software, which prepares and makes available information to decide on diagnoses or treatments, is in risk class IIa. However, if it can directly or indirectly cause a serious deterioration in health, it falls in a higher class. As a result, many applications would be excluded from the new regulation.

Further development of this *draft law* will be presented in the next eMEN newsletter.

[You can read the online article here](#)

Promoting safer (mental) health information exchange in the Netherlands by using international medical standards (SNOMED CT and HL7 FHIR)

In the Netherlands different types of healthcare service providers use different information standards and digital systems (sometime even



within their own organisation). This makes the exchange of medical data and prevention of mistakes very complex. Healthcare is increasingly occurring in networks. These are networks between patients, care providers, colleagues and organisations conducting research and contributing to the improvement of quality. Also, there is a need for patients to access and retrieve their medical data and participate in their own treatment.

In 2014 The Dutch Ministry of Health proposed plans to take a digital approach to make healthcare even safer, more patient-oriented and more efficient. This means that health organisations can digitally exchange information with patients in a standardized and secure manner. This helps people to take control of their own medical data and to be able to manage and use it securely within their own digital Personal Health Environments. A personal health environment (PHE) is a digital tool which you choose yourself and in which you can keep track of information about your own health and actively work on your health. The PHE allows you to manage and access medical data and also share it with others. This way you keep a grip on your health care data, from treatments to laboratory results, medications and vaccinations. And these data are yours and remain accessible throughout your entire life. In order to achieve this, it is important that, as a first step, all healthcare service providers use the same information (exchange) standards and legal contracts and healthcare information blocks. Healthcare suppliers must be Medmij certified. Medmij is a national trust framework on information exchange between a Personal Health Environment (PHE) and a healthcare institution.

The Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has started the MedMij program together with the Dutch Patients' Federation, Nictiz and the Care associations. MedMij is an agreement system aimed at the safe exchange of health information. It is a framework of agreements and standards that is represented on government level in the so-called 'Information Consultation' (IB), a partnership without further legal entity. Nictiz, the centre of expertise for eHealth, develops and manages these standards (health information blocks) and provides advice on their implementation.

Currently a large funding program called VIPP, which focuses on IT optimization, is being implemented by the main sector organisation for mental health care in the Netherlands (GGZ Nederland). VIPP makes it possible that patients themselves have access to their digital files and documents and increase the use of e-mental health. Furthermore, the data exchange within the entire care sector is supported, starting with medication safety.



The VIPP program also includes scaling up the use of e-Health by demanding the integration of direct access to e-health systems from the primary health system of professionals. Healthcare service providers need to achieve patient e-health usages percentages of between 10-15% in order to reach the minimum goals to keep the VIPP grant amount allocated to their organisation.

Although the first information blocks are not so exciting this is a very important first step. The mental health sector is already working on new information blocks like the (more dynamic) treatment plan and functionality to enable not only retrieving information but also enable digital cooperate together between patient and professional.

For more information about the VIPP program in the Netherlands please contact Arq Foundation (h.hiemstra@arq.org)

[Read the full article online](#)

Upcoming FREE transnational seminars and conferences

Over the life of the project, eMEN is delivering 24 transnational events across Europe addressing e-mental health evidence-based innovations, quality, access and scale.

29 November 2019: Berlin, Germany

Digital Innovations in Psychiatry and Psychotherapy

The aim of the event is to provide an overview of future key technologies in psychiatry and psychotherapy. What is the state of research and how can innovations transfer into health care routines? A highlight will be the presentation of several German innovation fund projects in the field of e-mental health. In addition, the current legal and political framework conditions in Germany are examined and discussed. An insight into the latest developments is provided by a start-up slam in which innovative applications are presented in short presentations. There is also a marketplace for e-mental health companies. The event is free and will take place in the context of the biggest [German congress on psychiatry](#). It brings together developers, researchers, users,

politicians and other health care stakeholders to find the best way into the digital future of psychiatry and psychotherapy.

A preliminary program will be published [here](#) soon.

You can already register for the event here: [online registration](#).

Share our animation!

Our eMEN animation is available at nweurope.eu/emen. It explains the concept of e-mental health and the many ways it can support mental wellbeing. We encourage you to share this with your networks, embed it in your website and use it in your presentations.



Why not join our transnational network?

eMEN is an e-mental health project running until May 2020, funded through the Interreg North West European Innovation Programme with a value of €5.36million. The six country partners are led by the Netherlands and include Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland and the UK, who together combine diverse technological, clinical, research, and policy expertise.

To receive updates on our future activities and connect to e-mental health stakeholders across Europe, we encourage you to [register to join our network](#).

We also welcome invitations to contribute to your event. Further contact information for all the partners is available at www.nweurope.eu/emen.