

YOUTHreach consortium receives 5-year EU funding to evaluate and implement three promising youth mental health interventions

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The YOUTHreach study will evaluate and implement three very promising existing interventions to support young people with mental health challenges. The study will embody a highly interdisciplinary approach, by linking concepts from mental health, epidemiology, implementation science, clinical practice, behavioural psychology, health economics, public health, ethics and SSH, artificial intelligence and data science.

Professor Thérèse van Amelsvoort of Maastricht University (UM) is coordinating the study, in which 14 institutions in 8 European countries and Australia are participating. The following partners will collaborate in this consortium: Maastricht University (the Netherlands), London School of Economics (the United Kingdom), Fatebenefratelli Brescia (Italy), Mittetulundusuhing Peaasi (Estonia), University of Birmingham (the United Kingdom), University of Barcelona (Spain), Ab.Acus Srl (Italy), University of Galway (Ireland), Zentralinstitut für Seelische Gesundheit (Germany), University of Melbourne (Australia), Amsterdam University Medical Centre (the Netherlands), Servicio Madrilenio de Salud (Spain), Charité-Universitätsmedizin Berlin (Germany) and the European Student Organisation (Belgium). The European Commission has allocated 8.5 million euros to this promising project.

“The current mental health care system is often designed by adults, without addressing the needs and perspectives of young people. In YOUTHreach the voice of young people is involved in all stages of the research. It is very exciting to start a study of this scale and potential impact!”

Professor Thérèse van Amelsvoort

Crucial timing in urgent youth mental health crisis

The allocation of this funding comes at a crucial time. Although the societal and economic impact of mental-ill health is overwhelming, investing in preventing and treating poor mental health has been relatively neglected compared to other diseases. An urgent European response is needed aimed at preventing and treating early stages of youth mental-ill health in order to reduce the individual, economic and societal burden of mental-ill health.

Promising interventions in European perspective

The three interventions in this study are using innovative, preventive, and transdiagnostic approaches necessary to tackle the current mental health challenges young people are facing. They offer valuable perspectives to the next generation of young people and healthcare professionals. Together they offer a complete, integrated youth mental health prevention & early intervention package, including:

1. Accessible, free, youth walk-in centres designed to promote trust within an anonymous setting.
2. A smartphone-based self-help app enabling young people to actively manage their own mental health.
3. A hybrid online support platform involving both professional and peer support.

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By evaluating and further implementing the targeted interventions, YOUTHreach aims to reduce the burden and stigma of mental-ill health, through early support and prevention, and hence to reduce mental health complications. The study will deliver an open platform with amongst others datasets, AI models for personalised (self)-monitoring, information packages and recommendations for researchers, public health experts and citizens.

Stay informed via:

Website: www.youth-reach.eu (soon online)

LinkedIn: YOUTHreach_EU

Instagram: @YOUTHreach_eu

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