

Feel4Diabetes: a European study aiming to promote healthy lifestyle and prevent type 2 diabetes in families from vulnerable population groups

Feel4Diabetes stands for “*Families across Europe following a hEalthy Lifestyle 4 Diabetes prevention*” and is an EU-funded project (2014-2019) aiming to develop, implement and evaluate an evidence-based and potentially cost-effective and scalable intervention program to prevent type 2 diabetes across Europe, primarily focusing on families from vulnerable groups.

Why focusing on families?

Any risk factors associated with type 2 diabetes tend to cluster within a family since its members share common genetic background, lifestyle habits, social and physical environment.

Promoting healthy behaviours and supportive environmental changes when the family is approached as a whole seems to be more effective compared to targeting the family members individually. This approach is also more cost-effective, since three generations are simultaneously approached and the older individuals might be further motivated to adopt the desired behaviours for the benefit of the younger family members.

Why focusing on vulnerable groups?

Since the prevalence of type 2 diabetes is higher in low and middle income countries and among low socioeconomic groups in the high-income countries, these vulnerable groups need to be identified and prioritized.

What will Feel4Diabetes do?

Feel4Diabetes will be implemented in two high-income countries (Belgium and Finland), two countries under economic crisis (Greece and Spain) and two low/middle-income countries (Bulgaria and Hungary). Feel4Diabetes is aiming to:

- Identify the communities with vulnerable groups within these six European countries.
- Develop, implement and evaluate a low-cost and applicable in low resource settings school and community-based intervention, aiming to create a more supportive social and physical environment and promote healthy lifestyle changes for children and their families.
- Identify high-risk families for type 2 diabetes within these communities and invite the parents or other adult members of the family to attend out of school counseling sessions, in order to further support them in adopting a healthier lifestyle for them and their children.
- Disseminate the results of the study and develop recommendations for health policy makers, aiming at embedding the learnings derived from the project into policies and practices on a local, national and international level.

Study partners

Feel4Diabetes comprises a multidisciplinary team of 10 partners across the EU:

Harokopio University, Greece – Coordinator
National Institute for Health and Welfare,
Finland
Ghent University, Belgium
Dresden University of Technology, Germany
University of Athens, Greece

International Diabetes Federation, Belgium
University of Zaragoza, Spain
Medical University of Varna, Bulgaria
University of Debrecen, Hungary
Extensive Life Oy, Finland

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