

## European Alliance Against Depression (EAAD) –

### *An evidence-based, 4-level action programme against depression and suicidality*

#### I. Background

The European Alliance Against Depression (EAAD) is based on the concepts and materials developed in the context of the Nuremberg Alliance Against Depression, a comprehensive intervention project which was conducted in the framework of the German Research Network on Depression and Suicidality (Kompetenznetz “Depression, Suizidalität”) in 2001 and 2002. The intervention led to a decrease in overall suicidal tendency (suicides and suicide attempts) of more than 20 percent in a target region. The EAAD combines this concept with the experiences and materials from partner countries in a European initiative ([www.eaad.net](http://www.eaad.net)).

#### II. 4-level approach

The 4-level approach of the EAAD is based on multiple simultaneous interventions that generate a synergistic effect. Figure 1 provides an overview of measures that were taken across the 17 participating countries during the projects EAAD I and II between 2004 and 2008.

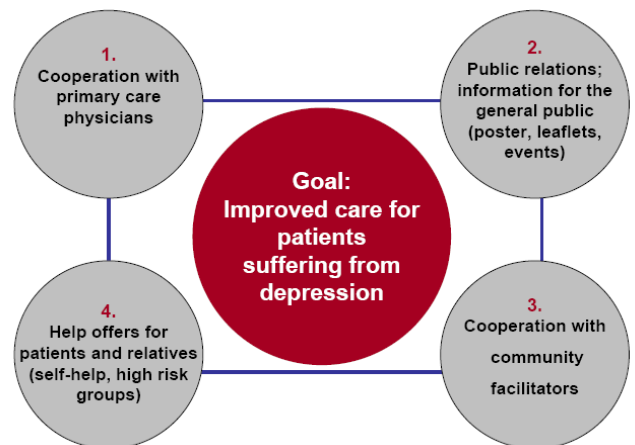


Fig. 1: 4-level approach

#### III. How does a regional network work?

Based on the above described 4-level-approach the model region implements its activities in three steps:

1. *Planning, design, strategy* (Status quo Analysis: e.g. analysis's of resources, recruiting of allies, engagement of a coordinator)
2. *Preparation* (e.g. involvement of patrons, integration of all relevant institutions, adaption of materials, training lectures, planning and locating first public events, contacting press/media of opening event)
3. *Implementation* (e.g. opening event, educational trainings of GP's, workshop for multipliers, lectures/public awareness, distribution of materials, self-help activities, hotline for patients after a suicide attempt).

#### III. How does EAAD spread its activities?

The methods used for the growth of regional networks are:

- (1) the formation/strengthening of relationships with key contacts in health politics, national professional organizations, and national self-help organizations;
- (2) co-operation with regional umbrella organizations, as well as potential new regional partners, in order to promote the dissemination of EAAD to new regions, and
- (3) organization of regular national level meetings.

The process of dissemination from regional to multi-regional or national activities against depression and suicidality has a strong bottom-up element. It is driven by the identification of the regional organizers and initiators with their regional alliance and a key for the success of EAAD.

#### IV. Evidence

Evidence concerning the efficacy of the 4-level-approach has already been delivered during the Nuremberg Alliance Against Depression. Nevertheless different research questions arose concerning efficacy of EAAD. For further evaluations the network defined the outcomes shown in Figure 2.

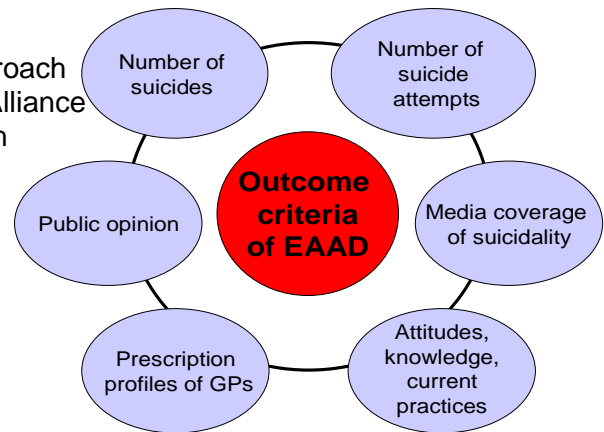


Fig. 2: Outcome criteria of EAAD

#### V. Dissemination of results

EAAD results were disseminated among different target groups: to the broad public, the European Commission, the media, experts and professionals as well as decision makers. Presentations to more than 60 national decision makers and also presentations on more than 60 scientific meetings and congresses took place. Further on more than 30 articles were published, are in press or prepared. EAAD has been described as best practice example in the green paper of the European Commission on mental health.

#### VI. Capacity Building

EAAD applied several strategies of capacity building: organisational and workforce development, partnership development and resource allocation. An evaluation of the implementation of the EAAD intervention showed that it was successful and that EAAD is well accepted and liked by the partners as well as the media which is shown in positive echoes from the media and the unbroken request in being supported by EAAD in implementing own local alliances against depression.

#### VII. Sustainability



A non-profit organisation was formed in 2008 based in Leipzig, Germany to continue and expand the work of EAAD. The main purpose of the society is to promote the public health and education and will furthermore promote the care and prevention of suicidality by initiating community-based intervention programmes. Based on the work of EAAD the project “Optimizing Suicide Prevention Programs and Their Implementation in Europe” has been started in 2008 (OSPI, [www.ospi-comeurope.com](http://www.ospi-comeurope.com)) (Hegerl, et al 2009).

Fig.3:  
Poster used in PR campaign (EAAD)  
„Depression can affect everybody”

#### References

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