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# BREAST CANCER: A REPORT TO ENHANCE PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE BEHAVIOUR AMONG INFORMAL CARERS POPULATION

*Pan-European Research: "OUTCOMES FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS Full Report": Barriers and Opportunities for health promotion practices such as breast cancer screening*

Caregiving of a person with a chronic disease can be a contributing factor to poor screening adherence. Women who assume the role of the informal carer face additional challenges in engaging in health promotion practices such as breast cancer screening. Explicitly, studies on carers' health behaviours stress the presence of impaired health behaviours, such as neglecting health care appointments, eating a poor-quality diet. While the outcome of breast cancer treatment largely depends on the timing of its detection and the national health systems throughout Europe follow the EU's recommendations for the provision of mammography screening to detect breast cancer in an early stage, women's adherence to screenings programmes is relatively poor. The average attendance in the EU was below the standard acceptable level that is 70% (Perry et al. 2016)

Prolepsis consortium, supported by the firm belief that Education and a tailor-made methodology can also prove to be a positive experience that helps carers change lifestyle and living practices, has finalised the production of the first project report OUTCOMES FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS aimed at setting the scene for the development of an educational programme and tools for women caregivers.

Each partner undertaken focus groups both with informal female caregivers, and with selected professionals, such as: educators, advanced nurse practitioners, medical oncologists, health promotion professionals and representatives from all relevant professional associations and societies (e.g. NGOs active on breast cancer issues).

Needs, attitudes, knowledge believes and perceptions of informal carers on breast cancer screening practices will guide the second phase of the project: this report represents our first attempt to create an evidence base before we proceed with the designing and piloting of the tools that will empower our target audiences.

Involved Carers were recruited from Cyprus (9), Italy (5) and Portugal (12). All responders recognized the value of screening tests such as mammography, but not all of them follow the prevention programs and often the sense of responsibility strictly connected to the role and the lack of time are indisputable issues.

*"The earlier the diagnosis, the better. I think people today are also more aware of this and in fact WHO has been warning. There is no one who is not afraid of this disease or who has not heard of it"*

*"Honestly I do not perform BSE often, I feel safe because I am doing my mammography and ultrasound tests. Keeps me safe"*

*"I often do the appropriate diagnostic examinations because I am afraid of this disease. My concern is that I have to constantly to watch for it." (P 3 CY)*

*"I do not have enough time to have a shower and ...I will do a BSE!" (P 2 CY)*

'I'm a caregiver and I can't get ill so, even if it's a stupid reasoning, I prefer not to be aware of potential diseases'

Thanks to these findings and data analysis Prolepsis wants to build awareness of the challenges faced by Carers and professionals working in this area. Then, the tools to improve their future, such as personalized mobile application, which will support informal carers to better manage self-care and behaviour change in illness prevention.. Finally, provide them with opportunities to enter health-literacy reinforcement programmes and training”.

The project has its own dedicated website <https://prolepsis.eu/> and the The full report “OUTCOMES FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS will be available **here**.

## NOTES TO EDITOR

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Project leaflets are available in English, Italian, Greek and Portuguese  
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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project aims to develop a mobile phone-based health intervention, as a means to enhance preventive health care behavior among informal carers' population with tailored individual messages, covering broad content areas while also overcoming restrictions to place and time of delivery. The specific objectives of the project are: 1 to create a methodology and relevant contents extending informal carers' knowledge regarding the impact of their prevention avoidance behavior on BC development 2 to educate and enhancing them to assume control over this disease through adopting and maintaining changes in their lifestyle and living practices. These include modifications of their lifestyle habits, self-monitoring, self-assessment and reinforcement of positive behaviors as well as encouragement of use of preventive BC services. 3 To develop a personalized mobile application (i.e. personal characteristics, needs and preferences), which will support informal carers to better manage self-care and behaviour change in illness prevention

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