

The European Alliance Against Depression (EAAD)

The European Alliance Against Depression (EAAD) is an international, non-profit organisation based in Leipzig, Germany with several European members and more than 100 regional network partners.

Background

Depression is a prevalent, severe and often life-threatening mental health disorder which accounts for around one quarter of all disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) lost in Europe. It is associated with deep suffering and is a huge burden to those affected. Depressive disorders as well as fatal and non-fatal suicidal behaviour continue to be important mental health issues. Because of the close relationship between depression and suicidal behaviour, it is likely that preventive actions improving the care and optimizing treatment for depressed patients results in a reduction of suicidal acts (completed and attempted suicides combined).

The 4-level intervention programme simultaneously aims for a better care for patients with depression and for the prevention of suicidal behaviour.

The Nuremberg Alliance against Depression, a two-year 4-level community based intervention programme has shown a 24% reduction of suicidal acts (completed and attempted suicides combined), compared to a baseline year and a control region. Serving as a **model project**, this approach has up to now been adopted and implemented in more than 100 regions in Germany and Europe.

The European Alliance Against Depression project received funding from the EU from 2004-2008. The main aim was the adaptation, implementation and evaluation of the 4-level intervention programme in various regions in Europe. Further evidence for this community based approach to target depression and to prevent suicidal behaviour could be provided.

In order to sustain, continue and expand the work and activities from the EU-funded EAAD projects, a **non-profit research organization, the European Alliance Against Depression e. V. (EAAD)** was founded in 2008 by a number of mental health experts from different European research institutions.



Fig. 1: EAAD 4-level intervention programme; overview of the approach, which had been implemented in 17 countries during the projects EAAD I and II (between 2004 and 2008) and within the EAAD association (2008 onwards)



Moreover, within the EU-funded suicide prevention project **OSPI-Europe** (www.ospi-europe.com), this 4-level-approach was further optimized, implemented and evaluated in four European regions (2008-2012).



Figure 2: Example of PR Material in Germany, Hungary and Portugal:

**Depression can affect everybody
 Depression has many faces
 Depression can be treated**

Based on the **4-level approach** of the EAAD illustrated in Figure 1, the targeted region is implementing the intervention on the different levels in three steps:

1. Planning, design, strategy (*Status quo analysis: e.g. analysis of resources, recruiting of allies, and engagement of a coordinator*)

2. Preparation (*e.g. involvement of patrons, integration of all relevant institutions, adaption of materials, training lectures, planning and locating of the public events, contacting press/media, PR*)

3. Implementation (*e.g. opening event, educational training of GPs, workshop for community stakeholders, lectures/public awareness, distribution of materials, self-help activities, hotline for patients after a suicide attempt*).

The process of dissemination from regional to multi-regional or national activities against depression and suicidal behaviour has a strong bottom-up element. It is driven by the relationship of the regional organizers and initiators with their regional alliance, and this is crucial for the success of EAAD.

Level	Name	Aims
1	Co-operation with primary and mental health care, focusing on trainings for general practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving diagnosis and treatment of depression Enhancing skills in dealing with mentally ill patients Facilitating primary care and mental health pathways and networks
2	Public relation activities: Education of the broad public by a depression awareness campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing knowledge about depression (and suicidal behaviour as one of its regular symptoms) Reducing depression stigma Transmitting the key messages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Depression is a disease.</i> <i>Depression can affect everyone.</i> <i>Depression has many faces.</i> <i>Depression can be treated.</i> Enhance help seeking (by creating the appropriate societal atmosphere and transmitting where to find help) Promoting positive mental health
3	Co-operation with community facilitators and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving gatekeeper skills and self-confidence in referring potentially depressed people into professional care Enhancing skills in dealing with depression Strengthening networks
4	Support for patients, high-risk groups and their relatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stabilising patients in acute suicidal crises Prevention of suicides Enhancing self-help skills Prevention of severe depression and suicidal behaviour in patients with mild to moderate depression Facilitating access to care and informing about medical pathways

Table 1: Description of the 4-level-intervention

Our aims

- Improving care and optimizing treatment for patients with depressive disorders
- Preventing suicidality by initiating community-based 4-level intervention programmes
- Implementing the EAAD 4-level intervention programme
- Supporting interested countries and regions by initiating regional alliances against depression
- Providing information and education to the general public and professionals regarding depression and suicide
- Supporting young researchers
- Conducting research projects and studies targeting depression, interventions and prevention of suicide

Activities and Research

Moreover, the EAAD is partner in various **EU funded research projects** targeting depression and suicide prevention over the next years and is **expanding its network** activities across Europe constantly. (www.eaad.net/news).



MasterMind

Assessment of the impact of cCBT (computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) through implementation at scale (almost 5.000 patient overall) and collaborative care facilitated by video conference across 11 EU and Associated Countries.



Delivery of evidence-based nutritional strategies for the effective prevention of depression in EU citizens. To unravel the multifaceted links of food intake, nutrient status, food-related behaviour and obesity with depression.



JOINT ACTION MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Building a framework for action in mental health policy at the European level building on previous work developed under the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being.

Table 2: Examples of research projects with current EAAD involvement

The EAAD was awarded the first European Health Forum Award in 2007 and is furthermore mentioned as an example of successful concept to prevent suicide (Green Paper on Mental Health).

Membership

The EAAD consists of 10 national chapters and 9 associate members from all over Europe (June 2014).

www.eaad.net

The membership includes support with implementing the 4-level intervention approach, assistance with adaptation of our materials, exchange of experiences with researchers and experts, participation in international research projects and support with national/international grant applications.

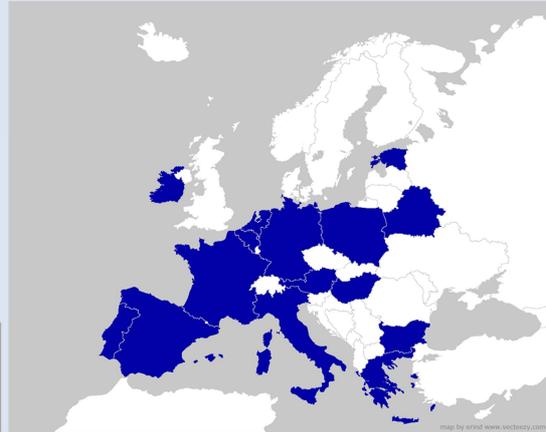


Figure 3: Map of current EAAD members

New members are always welcome to join the EAAD!

If you are interested in becoming part of our network or want to receive further information, please contact our EAAD coordinating centre in Leipzig, Germany.

Future activities

www.ifightdepression.com
www.predi-nu.eu
info-predinu@eaad.net

The European Alliance Against Depression will be the coordinating centre for **iFightDepression** from 2014 onwards and hence sustain the results, outcomes and products from the EU-funded PREDI-NU Project (www.predi-nu.eu).

The **iFightDepression.com website** is a unique **European Mental Health Website** including multifaceted contents in **eight languages** to raise awareness of depression and suicidality. It is addressing the broad public, young people, family & friends, community professionals and health care professionals with several resources and information material.

iFightDepression is an internet-based guided self-management intervention (available in eight languages), which includes training programmes to increase awareness of depression among health professionals as well.



iFightDepression
european alliance against depression

The **iFightDepression** tool aims to help individuals with **mild to moderate depression** to self-manage their symptoms and promote recovery. Access to the tool is **provided by GPs or mental health professionals** who have attended **specific accredited training**. You could ask your healthcare professional to enquire about the iFightDepression tool by contacting us (info-predinu@eaad.net).

We are offering the IFD tool and the accredited training to any interested GP or health professional.



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If you have any question, please contact us at any time
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