

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





Fig. 2: 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)

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

Current 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.



[ImpleMenAll](#) is a European collaboration towards faster and more effective implementation of eHealth interventions. The project was founded on the notion that implementation of new services and technologies is time-consuming and costly – and often fails completely – not least in the healthcare domain. Solidly based in research, and in a collaboration spanning from all corners of Europe to Australia, the project will construct its answer to this widespread problem.

[Read more](#)



[MoodFOOD](#) (Multi-country cOllaborative project on the rOle of Diet, Food-related behaviour, and Obesity in the prevention of Depression) will deliver sustainable, evidence-based **nutritional strategies** for the effective **prevention of depression**. A unique approach will be employed

integrating epidemiological evidence and a multi-centre prevention trial to unravel the multifaceted links of food intake, nutrient status, food-related behaviour and obesity with depression.

[Read more](#)



MasterMind (MANagement of mental health diSorders Through advancEd technology and seRvices - telehealth for the MIND) project aims to make **high quality treatment** for depression more **widely available**, making use of **ccBT** (computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) and collaborative care by video conference.

[Read more](#)



ComMent (Training for Community Mental Health Care) is a project under the ERASMUS+ programme that aims on **training** mental health professionals in implementing community based health care services. A learning platform and mentoring programme will be set up in order to **improve social entrepreneurial skills** in interested health care professionals.

[Read more](#)



We are all Citizens Citizens against depression: self-help, networking and therapeutic treatment against depression. The “We are all Citizens” Programme is implemented under the EEA Grants for Greece. It aims to strengthen civil society and enhance the contribution of NGOs to social justice, democracy and sustainable development.

[Read more](#)



ACROSSING is an innovative research training network funded by the EU H2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programme which aims to change the way millions of the older people in Europe and around the world live, are cared, and manage their conditions and maintain wellbeing. The EAAD is Associated Partner.

[Read more](#)

iFightDepression®

iFightDepression® is an internet-based, guided self-management programme available in several languages, which was developed in the framework of the PREDI-NU programme and is administered through the EAAD.



mentioned as an example of successful concept to prevent suicide (Green Paper on Mental Health).

The **iFightDepression® tool** offers:

- ✓ **self-management** free of charge
- ✓ professional **guidance** by trained (mental) health professionals
- ✓ principles of **cognitive-behavioural therapy** (CBT)
- ✓ registration and access via **personal log in**
- ✓ an **individual work pace**
- ✓ an **adapted version** of the programme with specific workshops on social relationships and social anxiety, especially for **adolescents and young adults**

The **iFightDepression® website** offers:

- ✓ **evidence based information** about depression and suicidal behavior
- ✓ **target group-specific** material for the broad public, young people, family, friends, health professionals and gatekeepers
- ✓ information in **12 languages** (more languages will follow)
- ✓ various **subpages** on different depression topics (e.g. causes, treatment options)
- ✓ a section containing useful contacts for **immediate help-seeking**

Achievements

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.

Moreover, the European Alliance Against Depression is mentioned as an effective, multicomponent intervention in the **Suicide Prevention Report of the WHO (2014)**.

Members



Contact

contact@eaad.net ■ www.eaad.net

☎ +49-3419724440 ☎

If you have any question, please contact us at any time
in our coordination centre in Leipzig, Germany:

Dr. Elisabeth Kohls and Juliane Hug
Project coordination office of the EAAD

✉ Mail: contact@eaad.net ✉

European Alliance Against Depression e.V. (EAAD)
Simmelweisstrasse 10
Haus 13
04103 Leipzig, Germany

References

- Arensman, E., Koburger, N., Larkin, C., Karwig, G., Coffey, C., Maxwell, M., Harris, F., Rummel-Kluge, C., van Audenhove, C., Sisask, M., Alexandrova-Karamanova, A., Perez, V., Purebl, G., Cebria, A., Palao, D., Costa, S., Mark, L., Tóth, M.D., Gecheva, M., Ibelshäuser, A., Gusmão, R. & Hegerl, U. (2015). Depression Awareness and Self-Management Through the Internet: Protocol for an Internationally Standardized Approach. *JMIR research protocols*, 4(3). doi: 10.2196/resprot.4358
- Gilissen, R., De Beurs, D., Mokkenstorm, J., Mérelle, S., Donker, G., Terpstra, S., Derijck, T. & Franx, G. (2017). Improving suicide prevention in Dutch regions by creating local suicide prevention action networks (SUPRANET): a study protocol. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 14(4), 349. doi: 10.3390/ijerph14040349
- Hegerl, U., Arensman, E., Aromaa, E., Coyne, J. C., Gusmão, R., Kopp, M., Maxwell, M., Meise, U., Pycha, R., Pull, C., Reisch, T., Scheerder, G., Sisask, M., Perez Sola, C., Tuulari, J., van Audenhove, C., van der Feltz-Cornelis, C.M. & Värnik, A. (2011). Improving the care of depressed patients and preventing suicides. The European alliance against depression. *German Medical Journal*, 11, 74-78.
- Hegerl, U., Mergl, R., Havers, I., Schmidtke, A., Lehfeld, H., Niklewski, G. & Althaus, D. (2009). Sustainable effects on suicidal behaviour were found for the Nuremberg alliance against depression. *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience*, 260, 401-406. doi: 10.1007/s00406-009-0088-z
- Hegerl, U., Rummel-Kluge, C., Värnik, A., Arensman, E. & Koburger, N. (2013). Alliances against Depression - A community based approach to target depression and to prevent suicidal behaviour. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioural reviews*, 37, 2404-2409. doi: 10.1016/j.neubiorev.2013.02.009
- Hegerl, U., Wittenburg, L., Arensman, E., van Audenhove, C., Coyne, J.C., McDaid, D. & Bramesfeld, A. (2009). Optimizing suicide prevention programs and their implementation in Europe (OSPI Europe): An evidence-based multilevel approach. *BMC Public Health*, 9, 428. doi: 10.1186/1471-2458-9-428
- Hegerl, U., Wittman, M., Arensman, E., van Audenhove, C., Bouleau, J. H., van der Feltz-Cornelis, C.M. & Pfeiffer-Gerschel, T. (2008). The European Alliance Against Depression (EAAD): A multifaceted, community-based action program against depression and suicidality. *The World Journal of Biological Psychiatry*, 9, 51-59. doi: 10.1080/15622970701216681
- Kohls, E., Coppens, E., Hug, J., Wittevrongel, E., Van Audenhove, C., Koburger, N., Arensman, E., Székely, A., Gusmão, R. & Hegerl, U. (2017). Public attitudes toward depression and help-seeking: Impact of the OSPI-Europe depression awareness campaign in four European regions. *Journal of affective disorders*, 217, 252-259. doi: 10.1016/j.jad.2017.04.006
- Scheerder, G., Van Audenhove, C., Arensman, E., Bernik, B., Giupponi, G., Horel, A.C., Maxwell, M., Sisask, M., Székely, A., Värnik, A. & Hegerl, U. (2010). Community facilitators' and (mental) health professionals' attitudes towards depression: a pilot study in nine EAAD countries. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 57, 387-400. doi: 10.1177/0020764009359742
- Székely, A., Thege, B.K., Mergl, R., Birkás, E., Rózsa, S., Purebl, G. & Hegerl, U. (2013). How to Decrease Suicide Rates in Both Genders? An Effectiveness Study of a Community-Based Intervention (EAAD). *PLoS ONE* 8(9): e75081. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0075081
- Värnik, A., Kölves, K., Allik, J., Arensman, E., Aromaa, E., van Audenhove, C., Bouleau, J. H., Van der Feltz-Cornelis, C. M., Giupponi, G., Gusmão, R., Kopp, M., Marusic, A., Maxwell, M., Oskarsson, H., Palmer, A., Pull, C., Realo, A., Reisch, T., Schmidtke, A., Sola, V. P., Wittenburg, L. & Hegerl, U. (2009). Gender issues in suicide rates, trends and methods among youths aged 15-24 in 15 European countries. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 113, 216-226. doi: 10.1016/j.jad.2008.06.004
- Värnik, A., Kölves, K., van der Feltz-Cornelis, C., Marusic, A., Óskarsson, H., Palmer, A., Reisch, T., Scheerder, G., Arensman, E., Aromaa, E., Giupponi, G., Gusmão, R., Maxwell, M., Pull, C., Székely, A., Pérez Sola, V., Hegerl, U. (2008). Suicide

methods in Europe - a gender specific analyses of countries participating in the “European Alliance Against Depression”. *J Epidemiol Community Health*, 62(6), 545-551. doi: 10.1136/jech.2007.065391

World Health Organization. (2014). Preventing suicide: A global imperative. World Health Organization.