

PRAISE-U calls for cooperation for prostate cancer screening

The National Societies Meeting brings PRAISE-U insights from around the world

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Since the kick-off of **PRAISE-U** in Brussels this April, the consortium has been hard at work building the foundation of this ambitious EU-wide prostate cancer early detection project. While PRAISE-U is a three-year project, these early steps require an influx of data and experiences from urological colleagues around the world. Thus, Praise-U representatives attended the National Societies Meeting in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, to present the project and gather information for the prostate cancer knowledge hub.

Presenting to the National Societies

To kick off the meeting, Prof. Monique Roobol presented the PRAISE-U project to the National Societies, introducing the Barriers to Effective Screening Tool (B.E.S.T.), in the form of a digital survey, to allow representatives to contribute to

data collection for the first step in the project: the needs assessment process. Prof. Roobol and her team directly discussed with members of the National Societies the state of Prostate Cancer Screening in their countries and identified key needs that were not being met. The team emphasized the importance of the six work packages within the project: project coordination, creation of the prostate cancer knowledge hub, development of a model for screening, conducting pilot site studies, the evaluation of functionality and sustainability of the pilots, and the communication and dissemination of the project findings. It is imperative that the PRAISE-U project receives input on all stages of development, from gathering data to establishing needs and forming the pilot sites, in order to adequately address the knowledge gaps which are currently present in European screening processes. Participation amongst members with key data and real world experience in prostate cancer screening is vital to making PRAISE-U a success.



Prof. Roobol leading the PRAISE-U discussion in Noordwijk



Dr. Tupikowski presents PRAISE-U at the press conference

To conclude the meeting, the team disseminated a survey to the National Societies members, with its objective to garner insights into country-specific practices and policies around prostate cancer screening. This survey not only allows for key insights into various countries needs, but raises key questions for how the pilot sites should be approached. Part of the process in identifying and selecting the pilot sites was the intent to address the varying needs of different regions – when there is not adequate digital infrastructure for a registry, for example, how can patients be reached to come in for a follow-up. Region-specific needs such as these are important factors in developing the project and creating a data set which adequately covers needs across demographics, regions and economic barriers.

What's next? The Polish Pilot Site

Meanwhile, the Polish pilot site is hitting the ground running with the enthusiastic support of one of the consortium members: the Lower Silesian Center of Oncology, Pulmonology and Hematology (DCOPiH). On 31 May 2023, DCOPiH hosted a press conference to inform the public about the launch of the project, and shortly afterwards the press release was distributed by a number of local newspapers

and media outlets. Furthermore, Dr. Krzysztof Tupikowski, the Polish pilot site lead, hosted a radio broadcast at "Polskie Radio Rodzina".

DCOPiH will be working together with the National Institute of Public Health and the National Institute of Hygiene in Poland (NIZP) to implement a pilot study as a part of the PRAISE-U project. In 2024, the DCOPiH will recruit approximately 3,500 men aged 50-69 from Lower Silesia to be included in the screening programme. To support this goal, the hospital received EU funding of almost 1 million euros.

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Poland is just one of five pilot sites for Praise-U, with the others in neighbouring Lithuania, Ireland and two in Spain. The pilot sites will play a crucial role in the needs assessment and state of play report of Work Package 2 (WP2), which establishes the current state of prostate cancer early detection in Europe. They will also contribute to and benefit from the development of a screening model by Work Package 3 (WP3) and, on that basis, develop a local implementation plan that best suits their identified needs. The Polish site's specific focus is on exploring the needs of setting up a screening programme where little infrastructure currently exists.

