

PRAISE-U project presents progress in Noordwijk

Collaboration is the future of PCa screening in Europe

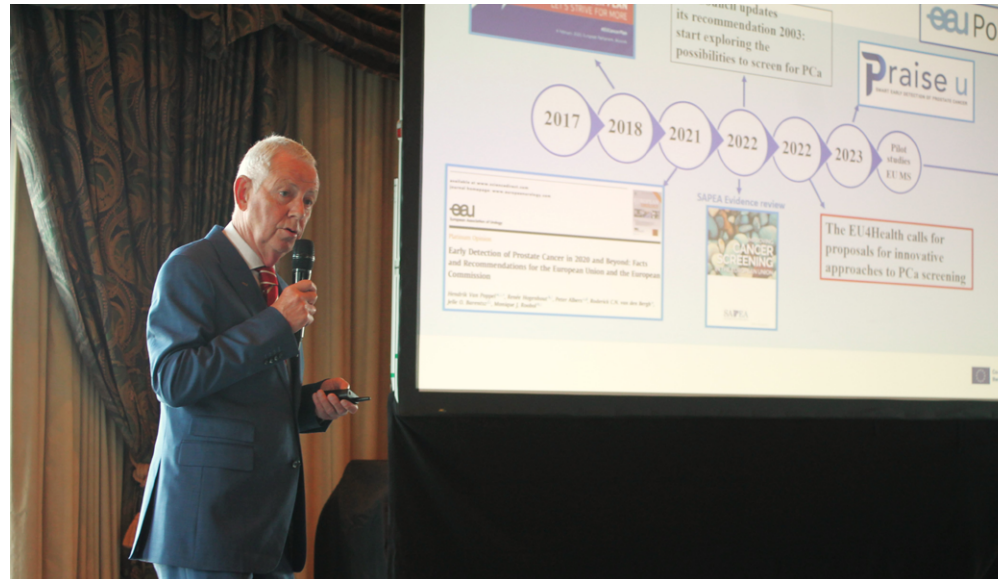
By Kevin McBride

Representatives of various National Urological Societies in Europe met in Noordwijk, The Netherlands this past June to deliberate on various topics across the fields of urology. To this delegation, Chair of the Policy Office, Prof. Hein Van Poppel (BE), presented the progress made by the PRostate cancer Awareness and Initiative for Screening in the European Union (PRAISE-U) project.

Prof. Van Poppel: "The importance of the project could not be overstated, and the cooperation of the National Societies is paramount to the project's success across Europe."

"Since the meeting in Noordwijk, various National Societies have reached out in hopes of working with PRAISE-U and starting screening programmes in their own countries."

The European Union contains a complex web of prostate cancer (PCa) screening policies, so the first step to developing a cohesive, Europe-wide screening programme is mapping the current state of screening across Europe. During last year's National Societies meeting, the PRAISE-U project presented the Barriers to Effective Screening Tools (BEST) survey and requested input from the National Societies to help map the realities of screening in their home countries. Over the past year, the PRAISE-U consortium has gathered results from the BEST survey and conducted literature reviews to assess the state of prostate cancer



Prof. Hein Van Poppel presented the PRAISE-U project to the National Societies in Noordwijk.

screening across the 27 EU Member States. This year, the team presented the National Societies with the results of this work in the form of country factsheets, succinctly outlining the state of PCa screening by country, with a final request for inputs and edits so that the fact sheets can be finalised.

Identifying different needs in Europe

A part of developing and improving a screening protocol and country-specific toolkits is identifying the various needs across the different regions of Europe. While there are generally accepted Europe-wide guidelines for PCa screening, some local governments either recommend entirely against screening or have screening policies that are not in line with general guidelines. In lower income or remote areas, the

screening process faces complications at the invitation stage, where identifying individuals who fall within the eligible population for screening is difficult. These regions also face difficulties with access to resources listed in the guidelines, such as MRIs. If a patient must travel far to receive an MRI, or its availability is limited, the local health authorities adapt their screening policies to their capacities. This has led to opportunistic screening and a lack of smart population-based screening programmes. Some countries are already beginning to address these concerns; for example, the Czech Republic and Sweden have already initiated their own screening programmes. By collaborating with the National Societies, the PRAISE-U team can assess needs in specific regions and develop adapted protocols.

Collaboration is key



The PRAISE-U team then presented a new path forward. This year the project will begin implementing the developed protocol at pilot sites in Lithuania, Ireland, Poland and Spain, and collaborate with further projects across Europe. Data collected during these pilots will be evaluated to inform future programmes. The PRAISE-U team reached out for potential collaborations with the National Societies to expand to further pilot sites beyond the initial five. The expansion to further collaborators would benefit both PRAISE-U and the pilot site regions by expanding and diversifying the data pool for the development of improved evidence-based guidelines. To help pilot sites kickstart their projects, the PRAISE-U team has developed a toolkit which includes protocol for implementation, key performance indicators, a code book of all variables to be collected, and an informed consent package for patients.

Since the meeting in Noordwijk, various National Societies have reached out in hopes of working with PRAISE-U and starting screening programmes in their own countries. The PRAISE-U team has followed up with Portugal, Italy, Austria and Norway to collaborate in the introduction of future pilot sites. The PRAISE-U project is gaining momentum, and the team is optimistic about the potential for a cohesive screening guideline for prostate cancer detection in Europe. If you are interested in contributing to the PRAISE-U project, we encourage you to visit www.praise-u.eu or email praise-u@uroweb.org.