

EP08.05

How to cope with a cohort study in primary care

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Background: research in GP setting face with barriers such as workload and a lack of time which can influence the motivation to collaborate in large collaborative studies.

The objective of this communication is to present the process made for the implementation of a multinational European cohort study in primary care and the strategies to motivate healthcare professionals to collaborate in it.

Methods: HEFESTOS is a cohort study aimed at knowing the main triggers and the prognosis of some factors related to the heart failure decompensations. The first protocol was presented in the European General Practice Research Network (EGPRN) meeting in 2013 in Malta to be discussed and improved. The final version has been granted by Spanish Government and EGPRN. Researchers from 8 countries accepted to participate in the validation cohort.

We present the strategies made to develop the derivation cohort study in Spain.

Results: The study was presented in 16 Primary Healthcare Centers in Barcelona. Among 236 health professionals attending these sessions, 117 (49.6%) accepted to participate. An informed consent form, recruitment sheet and study protocol were sent to them by e mail. A pulseoximeter, certificates of collaboration and partnership in scientific communications were offered to the collaborators recruiting a higher number of patients. After nine months, five out of 16 centers have not recruited any patient, and only 11% of the potential collaborators have recruited patients. Among centers participating, median of patients recruited was 5,5 (IQ 2.-112).

An informative report showing their participation has been sent to the collaborators in order to motivate them to recruit patients by comparing them with the others.

Conclusions: Implementing a collaborative cohort study in primary care in the current circumstances is very difficult and strategies to improve the motivation are needed.