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Practice support for patients with chronic conditions

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Background: In February 2012, the Wonca Europe Network EQuIP was announced as the winner of the WONCA Anniversary Research Fund. The project, known as PECC-WE (Patient Empowerment in Chronic Conditions - WONCA Europe), was launched during the WONCA Europe 2015 conference in Istanbul.

Aim: The PECC-WE project aims to improve the quality of patient care by developing evidence based education and training for European GPs and Practice Nurses so that they can effectively and efficiently empower patients to improve their own self management of chronic conditions (non-communicable disease) in the context of general practice/primary care.

Method: Work Package 1a: Systematic review Work Package 1b: Create an Online Repository of Information for Education, Research, and Exploration of the Concept of Patient Empowerment Work Package 1c: EQuIP Working Group on Patient Empowerment for Self-Management in Chronic Conditions. Work Package 2: Development of the Evidence Based Summaries and Educational Framework Work Package 3: Evaluation of the online course for Patient Empowerment for Patient Self-Management of Chronic Conditions.

Results: 99% (570 out of 576 respondents) stated that the course helped to improve their skills and competence. 97% (557 out of 575 respondents) found that the course motivated them to learn and reflect upon the topic. 88% (505 out of 575 respondents) found the applicability of skills and knowledge obtained from the course in clinical practice to be either 'Excellent' or 'Good'.

Conclusions: GPs must be trained to help patients to identify their own goals for their health, and support them in finding ways to make the necessary changes. It is crucial to develop an understanding of why unhealthy habits are hard to change. And it is equally important to develop tools for how to start the process, and how to support the patient along the road.