

Epilepsy training course developed

Epilepsy is the most common chronic neurological disorder that characteristically causes a series of repetitive unprovoked seizures, usually consisting of unusual bodily movements, effects on consciousness, and altered behaviour. Although its cause is often unknown, it may be triggered by traumas such as a car accident or tumours.

A three-year EU-funded Socrates Grundtvig II project aimed at drafting a curriculum for health care and other professionals working with epileptic persons has recently been concluded.

The Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association (CMEA) and the University of Malta's Department of Clinical Pharmacology co-ordinated the project, which was entitled "Curriculum regarding Epilepsy for Professionals Allied to Medicine (PAMS)", together with the European Epilepsy Academy (Eurepa), Bethel Epilepsy Centre in Germany and Budapest Epilepsy Hospital in Hungary.

Much work was done to find various didactic methods that would best serve such professionals and a preliminary translation of the curriculum modules into Hungarian, German and Maltese was undertaken.

Last month, the last project workshop was held in Malta, organised by Dr Janet Mifsud from the university's Department of Clinical Pharmacology, Mario Dimech, CMEA president, and Victoria Dimech, CMEA secretary.

The workshop consisted of an experimental trainers' course based on the draft curriculum developed, and the Maltese, German and Hungarian participants used a number of interactive learning methodologies to discuss questions such as "What services for persons with epilepsy would I like to see in Malta?" and "Which skills of my service am I satisfied with and which skills do I wish to develop?"

The project partners are now expected to seek additional funds to continue the project to enable more interaction and pilot trials with professionals from other countries to see how the curriculum modules work in practice in different cultural contexts.