

GRUNDTVIG II WORKSHOP: THE ROLE OF PAMS IN MALTA

The last workshop of an EU funded Socrates Grundtvig II “Curriculum regarding Epilepsy for Professionals Allied to Medicine (PAMS)” being co-ordinated by the Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association (CMEA) together with the Department of Clinical Pharmacology, University of Malta, and with colleagues from European Epilepsy Academy (Eurepa); Bethel Epilepsy Centre Germany and Budapest Epilepsy Hospital, Hungary, took place in Malta last month.

This was a three year project which aimed to prepare a curriculum for those health care and other professionals (PAMs) working with persons who have epilepsy. Epilepsy is the most common chronic neurological disorder. The condition encompasses a range of functional disorders of the brain, the common characteristic of which is a series of repetitive unprovoked seizures. There are over 30 different types of seizures. Most epileptic seizures last somewhere between a few seconds and a few minutes. These may be single and isolated or may occur in a series of seizures usually manifesting themselves as unusual bodily movements, effects on consciousness, and altered behaviour, depending on the part of the brain that is malfunctioning. Very often the cause of the epilepsy is unknown, although some may begin to experience seizures following trauma such as a car accident, or tumors.

During this final workshop, a pilot trainers’ course, based on the draft curriculum developed, was organised for a number of Maltese PAMs. Dr. Janet Mifsud (Department of Clinical Pharmacology, University of Malta; Advisor, CMEA), Mr. Mario Dimech (President, CMEA) and Ms. Victoria Dimech (Secretary, CMEA) organised the workshop.

The workshop participants used a number of interactive learning methodologies to discuss ‘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 succeeded in identifying and giving an outline to the modules for the curriculum and identify the literature which will supplement the guidebook. Preliminary translation into Hungarian, German and Maltese is underway. There was a great deal of work done on various didactic methods which will best serve the PAMs. It is being envisaged that the partners seek further funds in order for the project to be continued with more interaction and pilot trials with PAMs from other countries so as to assess how the modules work in practice in different cultural contexts.