

PRESS RELEASE/ Event summary

Start of the project

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## The Murcian Health Service (SMS) and the Foundation for Healthcare Training and Research in the Region of Murcia (FFIS) participate in a European project addressed to the reduction of the burden of Dementia and other Neurological Disorder and related diseases

- More than 7,500 citizens will be involved in 44 pilot actions foreseen during the project.
- The project will receive 5 million euro during three years involving 47 entities from 17 countries.
- More than 2,000,000 citizens will be reached to increase awareness and reduce the stigma associated with these diseases.

Mental disorders pose a significant public health challenge due to their prevalence, impact on quality of life and economic burden, calling for demanding policy action. According to WHO data, mental health issues cost the EU€600 billion annually, equivalent to 4.1% of GDP. The pandemic has further exacerbated this crisis, particularly affecting young people and those with pre-existing conditions.

In parallel, the global aging population continues to grow, with 9% of people currently over 64 years old. The United Nations (UN) projects that by 2050, this figure will increase to 16%, meaning that one in six people will be over 64 years old (UN 2019; Yang, Zheng, and Zhao 2021). Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as dementia and other neurological disorders, considered the seventh leading cause of death and the main cause of dependency among the elderly, being present in 70% of cases. Neurodegenerative disorders, including Alzheimer's disease, the most common neurological disorder associated with dementia, accounting for 60-70% of all dementia cases, currently affecting over 55 million individuals worldwide. The pandemic has placed additional pressures on people's mental health, especially among the young and those with pre-existing mental health conditions.

To address these challenges, the European Commission has prioritized mental health alongside physical health, introducing 20 flagship initiatives supported by €1.23 billion in funding from different financial instruments. The **Joint Action JADE Health - Joint Action addressing DEmentia and HEALTH** - is one of these projects **designed to integrate validated best practices and/or (cost-)effective**

interventions across countries and regions through transnational pilot initiatives, complementing and reinforcing existing policies and programs.

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Project partners from 17 countries, 22 Affiliated Entities (AE) and 8 Associated partners (AP) as well as major stakeholders will gather on 12-13<sup>th</sup> February 2025, in Merida, Spain for the kick-off event of the Joint Action JADE health. The event will be organised by the Fundación Para La Formación e Investigación de los Profesionales de la Salud de Extremadura (FUNDESALUD), the lead partner and coordinator of the consortium.

Corinne Salinas, JADE Health project advisor from HaDEA, the European Health and Digital Executive Agency of the European Commission, and high-level experts in the field of dementia and related stigma, will participate in the event.

JADE Health adopts a comprehensive and holistic approach to healthcare, focusing on multiple dimensions of well-being. These include enhancing health literacy, raising awareness about dementia, and promoting early detection through screening and primary prevention, particularly among high-risk populations. The project is committed to supporting individuals living with dementia or other neurological disorders by fostering early intervention and improving education. Furthermore, JADE Health seeks to elevate societal awareness of dementia by providing targeted education to relatives, care professionals, and other key stakeholders.

The kick off event will provide a unique opportunity to deep dive in the challenges, main goals and key components of the project, aligning with the European Commission's *'Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health 2023'*: [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-of-life/european-health-union/comprehensive-approach-mental-health\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-of-life/european-health-union/comprehensive-approach-mental-health_en). Additionally, the event will facilitate the establishment of a common vision among project partners, focusing on the selection of best practices and care models for adaptation, while also outlining the next steps for work package tasks.

The Murcian Health Service (SMS) and the Foundation for Healthcare Training and Research in the Region of Murcia (FFIS) are affiliated entities within the Joint Action (JA). The researchers representing SMS include Ana Morales Ortiz, the principal researcher at SMS, along with Juan Marín Muñoz and María Fuensanta Noguera Perea. The FFIS researchers are María del Pilar López Acuña, the principal researcher at FFIS, as well as Salvadora Manzanares Sánchez, Rosa María Fernández Tarazaga, and Marcos Rivera Garvin. They will attend the kick-off meeting in person, or online, providing an overview of the planned work package activities.

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## About JADEHEALTH:

The overarching objective of JADE Health aims to improve prevention, early detection and management of dementia and other neurological disorders, thus reducing health inequalities and addressing the needs of vulnerable population. This will be achieved through evidence-based exchange of best practice to ensure sustainability, placing a strong emphasis on prevention and early detection and involves the implementation of a new diagnosis and treatment model leveraging cutting-edge technology.

JADE Health consortium represents an unprecedented collaborative effort, uniting 17 European countries to address dementia. The participating countries are: Spain, Denmark, Malta, Estonia, Norway, Italy, Ukraine, Germany, Slovenia, Finland, Latvia, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia, Czechia and Lithuania. This large-scale initiative will facilitate the creation of a comprehensive picture of the dementia landscape across Europe. By fostering collaboration, JADE health will gain valuable insights into the global impact of dementia, encompassing its influence on society, the environment, families, and broader social spheres. Consortium partners are a mix of national and regional ministries of health, healthcare services, public health institutions, medical universities, research organisations, health foundations, dementia and mental health centres and municipalities. The multidisciplinary nature of the consortium allows to address dementia across its entire spectrum, from preventive measures and early detection strategies to treatment options and the development of effective public policies, in order to improve the quality of life of both the sick persons and their environment

Funded by the European Union's EU4Health fund, the JA will span three years and will be coordinated at both the European and national levels by the FUNDACION PARA LA FORMACION E INVESTIGACION DE LOS PROFESIONALES DE LASALUD DE EXTREMADURA (FUNDESALUD).

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