Enhancing Compliance: Standardized Portioning and a Digital Solution for Mandatory Nutritional Screening in Hospitals

Project team: On behalf of GrESPEN's Board, Prof. Michael Chourdakis
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Hellenic Society for Medical/Clinical Nutrition & Metabolism (GrESPEN)
AFFILIATED MEMBER OF ESPEN FOR GREECE

Description of the initiative

- **Background/context:** In 2012, our efforts to improve clinical nutrition in Greece led to the enactment of a novel legislation mandating the establishment of Clinical Nutrition Departments (CNDs) in public hospitals and the formation of Nutrition Support Teams (NSTs). Additionally, we developed an educational resources platform to support the lifelong education of healthcare professionals. Building on these milestones, our continued efforts led to the 2017 legislation regulating the operation of CNDs. Our most recent achievement is the enactment of legislation making nutritional screening mandatory in all hospitals (otherwise no reimbursement from the public insurance will be given), as well as standardizing portion sizes and therapeutic protocols. However, ensuring compliance remains a significant challenge. To address this, we now aim to develop a digital platform that will integrate nutritional screening into routine hospital practice, strengthening nutritional support, ensuring adherence to protocols, and improving patient outcomes.
- **Rationale for the initiative:** Progress in nutrition legislation has been made, however hospitals face barriers to its effective implementation, including inconsistent screening methods and lack of standardized portioning. As a result, many at-risk patients remain undiagnosed, and nutritional interventions may vary widely, leading to worse patient outcomes and increased healthcare costs.
- **Objectives and scope:** With mandatory nutritional screening legislation in place, we aim to ensure its effective implementation through a digital platform that simplifies screening, and integrates well with hospital computer systems and standard operating procedures.

Planned activities & deliverables

- **Outline the steps to be taken:**

1. Research and data collection: Organisation of scientific events, and participation inresearch projects (incl. NutritionDay) and campaigns. **(completed)**
2. Building alliances: GrESPEN's Board (one member of which is member of the Greek parliament), engaged in discussions with stakeholders, policy makers and representatives from the Ministry of Health, presenting evidence on the prevalence and impact of malnutrition to advocate for the importance of nutritional screening in hospitals. **(completed)**
3. Drafting the legislation

The law includes: a) the implementation of universal nutritional screening **(completed)**
b) the standardisation of serving sizes and meals (e.g., standard, low/high PRO, low/high fiber) provided in hospitals **(in progress)**

4. Enactment of the law **(partially completed, with the portions standardization in progress)**
5. Development of the Digital Platform: Creation of a user-friendly digital platform to automate the nutritional screening process in hospitals. **(in progress)**
6. Pilot Testing & Feedback Collection: Testing the platforms in selected hospitals to evaluate its functionality. **(next step)**
7. Full implementation of the digital platform across all hospitals that receive reimbursement from the national insurance funding. **(next step)**

- **What are the concrete deliverables of the project?**
  - A digital platform for nutritional screening & standardisation of portioning and meal categories in hospitals.

What achievements are possible in the next 12 and 24 months?

- **1-12 months:** Completion of the digital platform development, including pilot testing in select hospitals and feedback collection from healthcare professionals. Progress on the implementation of standardized portioning.
- **12-24 months:** Full implementation of the platform in all hospitals, alongside the adoption of standardized portioning and meal protocols.

Resources & enablers

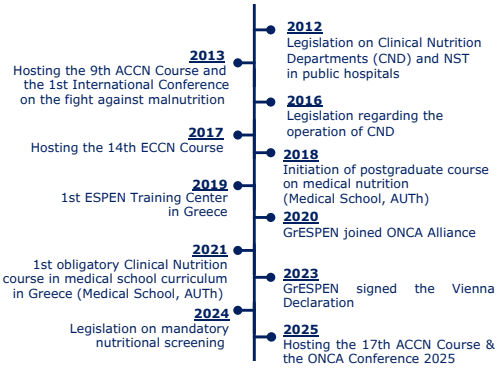
- **Personnel & financial needs**

Administrative assistant: Responsible for coordinating and facilitating administrative tasks related to the project, assisting in organizing events, managing documentation, and liaising with stakeholders
Platfrom Development Team: Responsible for the creation of the platform.

- **Specify how the grant will be spent**

Salaries: 24,000 euros
Platform development: 10,000 euros
Material: 6,000 euros

- **What factors will make it successful?**
  - Successful development and integration of the digital plaform into hospital systems will be a key step in ensuring mandatory screening.
  - Continuous feedback collection and evaluation during pilot testing will ensure the platform meets healthcare professionals' needs.
  - The effective implementation of standardized portioning protocols will further support a consistent nutritional care.



+ 80 LLL Courses since 2012

Additionally: Participation in nDay since 2011, Translation of Blue Book, Organisation of the 1st & 2nd Hands-on Workshops on Enteral & Parenteral Nutrition

Results/outcomes & expected impact

- **How will the findings be implemented?**

The findings will be implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, hospital directors, and healthcare professionals. Our goal is to establish the digital platform as a critical tool for universal nutritional screening, ensuring early identification and treatment of malnutrition in hospitals across Greece.

- **How will this project advance patient care/contribute to optimal nutritional care?**

By enabling a standardized nutritional screening, the platform ensures timely identification of malnutrition, allowing healthcare providers to make informed decisions and tailor personalized nutritional interventions.

- **What makes the project innovative?**

The project is innovative because it combines technology and legislation to create a digital solution that simplifies and standardizes nutritional screening.

- **Will the project be likely to influence national nutrition policy?**

Yes, the project aims to influence national nutrition policy and emphasize the importance of optimal nutritional support by establishing a digital platform that ensures nutritional screening across hospitals.

- **Is the project transferable to other settings / countries?**

Yes, the project provides a framework that can be adapted and implemented in other settings or countries facing similar challenges related to malnutrition.

☑ **Please tick to confirm the PEN letter of endorsement is attached. Incomplete submissions will not be considered.**

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