



TRAINING PATH FOR EUROPEAN PHLEBOLOGISTS



Training Path for Phlebologists in Europe – TRAPP TRAPP”

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The TRAPP project operated in the field of vocational education and training (VET), with a focus on Phlebology, a specific discipline of the medical profession.

The project started from the need of developing an EU level VET curriculum with harmonized training standards, qualifications, and accreditations. This depends on the fact that Phlebology which deals with the treatment of venous and lymphatic disorders, although it is fully recognised in practice, does not have specific specialization courses in most of the Member States. On the contrary, education and training in topics connected to Phlebology are often included in courses that have a wider scope. On the other hand, doctors specialized in various disciplines (such as Dermatology, Angiology, Vascular Surgery, etc.) treat also patients affected by venous and lymphatic disorders. The need is becoming more urgent if we take into consideration that the incidence of these diseases in the EU is increasing dramatically. It is in fact estimated that in 2050 roughly 35% of the population will be affected, compared to the current incidence of 25%. This is the effect of the increased life expectancy and increasing of obesity. Such widespread pathology is a heavy burden for society in terms of health care costs and of working hours lost. It must be considered that the treatment of venous and lymphatic disorders will affect more than 1% of the national health budgets in Europe. It is, therefore, evident that doctors specialised in other fields cannot fully ensure the correct treatment of the patients, with all the related risks.

While a general understanding of the problem exists in the scientific and medical community, a clear solution has not yet been proposed. The TRAPP project has proposed to fill the existing gaps by delivering a VET model for practitioners in Phlebology and a professional qualification framework to be adopted at the EU level, also in order to pave the way for the creation of a new ESCO profile in the field.

The project achieved the following objectives:

- Definition of a common list of skills and qualifications to operate as a phlebologist, also in relation to the ESCO classification and the National Qualification Frameworks;

- Creation of the first European VET course in phlebology, which is composed of 13 modules;
- Increased digitalisation in education through the launch of an e-learning platform;
- First recognition and certification of the TRAPP course granted by the International Union of Angiology (IUA).

To achieve these goals we have done several activities: harmonize education and training in the European Union with high-level teaching and certification programs; the creation of courses and on-line verification of Phlebological theoretical knowledge, recognition of the professional profile of “Phlebologist ” in Europe; creation of a National Register of Phlebologists in each country involved in the Project, creation of the European Register of Phlebologists. The Register does not address a specific speciality. Doctors of different specialities can be enrolled, such as dermatologists, vascular surgeons, cardiovascular surgeons, general surgeons, angiologists, imagists doctors and others.

The Curricular structure was defined by the Scientific Council with the collaboration of representatives from many countries. The Training Course includes modules in: basic phlebological science, venous pathology, non-invasive imaging, sclerotherapy, compression therapy, surgical treatments in Phlebology, thermal ablation, glue obliteration, invasive treatments for venous stenosis or thrombosis, treatment of venous ulcer, treatment of lymphoedema, drug treatments miscellaneous.

Three intellectual outputs were produced and delivered:

- O1: European VET curriculum in Phlebology;
- O2: E-learning platform;
- O3: Training handbook.

In addition to that, a pilot VET course in Phlebology was implemented in the e-learning platform. Our e-learning platform provides doctors with some of the knowledge they need to better serve the community. See https://europeanregisterphlebologists.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Trapp_moodle_student_guide.pdf

A total of 73 professional doctors from 4 countries (Italy, Greece, Portugal and Romania) completed the course.

The main impact reached in trained doctors is their increased professional profile thanks to the acquisition and/or update of skills in Phlebology. This will allow primarily to treat their patients more effectively. Additionally, thanks to the use of the e-learning platform, they have increased their digital skills that are now a necessary knowledge in a digital economy and society. The partners' staff and trainers have enhanced their teaching competencies and professional profile, through the acquisition of new teaching skills in a digital environment. They have also received positive benefits from the exchange of practices and working moments in a multinational environment, which allowed them to enrich their teaching perspectives and to open up to better cooperation with doctors and professionals from other countries. Policy-makers have received new

findings and recommendations to be used to feed policy reforms in the educational field by mainstreaming the new methodologies in future policy strategies and by introducing the phlebologist among the medical professions.

Hospitals can benefit from a higher number of skilled phlebologists. This shall ensure better treatment for their patients and contribute to increasing the number of patients who will use their services and facilities.

In this project, coordinated by the Romanian Society of Phlebology, are involved teams from 5 European countries: Italy, Greece, Portugal, Belgique and Romania. Summary of participating organizations:

SOCIETATEA ROMANA DE FLEBOLOGIE- Romania
EUROPEAN HEALTH CHAMBER- Belgium
ELLINIKI ETAIREIA DERMATOXEIROURGIKIS -Greece
ASSOCIAZIONE FLEBOLOGICA ITALIANA- Italy
EUROPARTNERS SRL -Italy
PR.A.IT Soc. Coop.- Italy
REGISTRO EUROPEO DEI FLEBOLOGI- Italy
EUROPE VEIN CENTER - Portugal

The results of the project were presented to the following European Phlebological organizations, by the coordinator of the project, through oral presentations and flyers at their scientific events:

- International conference: Dermatologia la interfata dintre specialitati, Iasi Romania 23-25 May 2019
- The 12th National Congress of The Romanian Society of Angiology and Cardiovascular Surgery, with international participation, 23-25 of May 2019 Cluj Napoca Romania,
- The 3rd Another Phlebology Meeting 4-5 October 2019, Budapest, Hungary www.phlebology.hu
- The 16th Romanian Congress of Phlebology with international participation, 24-27 October, Timisoara, Romania,
- The 10th Annual Meeting of Balkan Venous Forum, 1-2 November 2019, Thessaloniki, Greece
- In the European Parliament, at the Health Committee on 20th of November 2019

The final report has been submitted and the project was evaluated in February –March 2020 and obtained one of the highest scores in the field.

Conclusions: on behalf of the European Commission, this 2-year project approved by the Romania Erasmus+ Agency, with representatives from many countries have defined the professional profile of the European Phlebologist. The first EU-wide VET curriculum entirely dedicated to Phlebology contains the most relevant and important key competences that are currently required to exercise the profession and

that are commonly recognized as such by all the national societies of phlebology and by other specialized training institutes.

Several countries were represented by colleagues with activities in the specific field of Phlebology who have finished the first draft to be approved at the level of the European Commission.

Hopefully the auspices of International Union of Angiology may also ensure the sustainability of the results after the project is concluded/ finished. At the same time, it would also ensure the permanent updating of the novelties/ innovations concerning the venous disease as well as, the data base with the European Phlebologists. IUA may take over the E-learning platform, thus permanently updating it and the related enquiries. It may/ will issue graduation certificates for the trainees/ participants.

Sincerely yours,

Daniela Radu

Project Coordinator

