



# CO-CAPTAIN

Cancer prevention among individuals with mental ill-health: CO-adapting and implementing patient navigation for primary cancer prevention

**Early interventions not only improve long-term individual outcomes but also have a profound impact on the health of communities and the efficiency of healthcare systems. The cost-effectiveness and cost-utility of prevention and screening actions are well-demonstrated.**

In the European Union, an estimated 84 million individuals grapple with enduring mental health conditions, including but not limited to anxiety disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, PTSD, schizophrenia, eating disorders, disruptive behaviour, dissociative disorders, and neurodevelopmental disorders. Mental health concerns, while of paramount importance, often eclipse the physical health challenges faced by this demographic, notably cancer, which ranks as the second leading cause of death after suicide. The Health Navigator model is a proven, cost-effective approach. By focusing on underserved communities, we can make a significant contribution to Public Health, particularly in the areas of mental health and healthcare services.

**CO-CAPTAIN is at the forefront of this initiative, focusing on enhancing coordination and continuity of care through Patient Navigation (PN) in mental health services.** Our approach is pivotal in overcoming barriers that hinder individuals with mental health conditions from accessing the most suitable care. We will mark a significant step towards providing high-quality preventive cancer care services for people living with mental health conditions. We are dedicated to providing evidence-based, person-centred navigation to address cancer care disparities and facilitate primary prevention access, targeting known risk factors such as smoking and overweight in individuals with mental ill-health.

**Our project will be piloted in Austria, Greece, Poland and Spain.**



We aim to co-adapt the features of PN for primary cancer prevention tailored to the specific needs of individuals with mental ill-health and identify implementation strategies for local communities in the 4 pilot sites. Each pilot site will inform the general and specific features of the PN program for cancer prevention, as per the guidelines and training provided by MHE.

**CO-CAPTAIN will implement a large-scale pilot of primary cancer prevention in different health and care systems in Europe, informing the blueprint for policy transformation.**

**Our goal is to identify barriers and facilitators to primary cancer prevention with key stakeholders,** including patients, caregivers, care team members, representatives of mental health organizations, or service managers, but outreaching the whole society. Patient Navigation has potential applicability across the cancer care continuum, but further research is needed to identify current bottlenecks and barriers that might influence the implementation of PN's primary cancer prevention programs for individuals with mental health conditions in different healthcare systems across the EU.

