

Regional Centre for advanced laser therapies in Ophthalmology

1. Project summary

The overall objective of the project is the *Improvement of the quality of life for the population from the cross-border area with specific eye pathologies.*

Last generation diagnose and surgical equipment and advanced training for expert ophthalmologists ensured through the joint actions of the two project partners will create access for the entire population of the cross - border area to modern high quality services of diagnose and eye surgery in Timisoara and Nova Crnja. Throughout the duration of the project, high quality eye diagnose and surgery services will be available for free to all the citizens of the cross-border area (as early diagnosis and treatment is of particular importance for the treatment of the eye pathologies with progressive behaviour). In addition, the project partners take the commitment to continue to supply the diagnosis and surgery services for the citizens of the cross-border area without any direct charges, after the end of the implementation period. The awareness campaign lead by the 2 project partners will improve prevention and early diagnosis of specific eye diseases, with important effects on the quality of life of the population.

The network of specialists developed through the project around the 2 poles (Timisoara and Nova Crnja) will increase significantly and with immediate effect the access of the population from remote areas to specific healthcare services, as well as the quality of these services. More specifically, eye diagnose equipment exists in hospitals from each of the 9 counties/departments of the cross-border region, although incomplete and of relatively low quality. Still, the existing equipment can be significantly better exploited through a better training of the medical staff.

Through the activities of the project, at least 2 ophthalmologists from each county/district will be trained, which will instantly improve the quality of the diagnose and surgery services throughout the region. As the training will focus on the “train the trainers” principle, the knowhow will be disseminated throughout the region. With immediate effect, patients will have access to improved services, locally.

Through dedicated conferences, the project also targets to train family doctors from the entire cross-border area in the field of ophthalmology. The training will be focused on the diagnose procedures. By improving the skills of the family doctors in the diagnose of eye pathologies and by teaching the family doctors the best immediate measures for the patients, the family doctors will identify earlier the presence of the pathologies and will give better directions to the patients. This will bring important improvements in the accuracy of the diagnosis process allowing at the same time for an earlier diagnosis (which has an important impact on the evolution of the patient).

Not least, the costs and benefits of different treatment plans will be evaluated based on the local factors and the conclusion will be made available to patients and family doctors, as suggestions for approaching the pathologies.

The project also targets to perform a screening in the field of diabetes, as it is expected that, throughout the cross-border area, the majority of people affected by diabetes are not diagnosed. Without a positive diagnose, treatment solutions cannot be applied, and the state of the patients is deteriorating irreversibly. The interest of the project in diabetes is based on the fact that the presence of diabetes to a patient is responsible for a great percentage of the severe eye pathologies.

Throughout the duration of the project, the 2 partners will organize conferences for the general population, with particular interest for the roma population and the population from remote areas. Informative materials regarding the risks of the eye pathologies, their symptoms and treatment options, the costs and benefits of each option will be elaborated and distributed. Press releases will also be sent constantly to the regional press. The awareness campaigns will help the population avoid eye diseases and will improve the diagnose time.

During the 24 months of implementation, 16.000 citizens of the cross-border area will benefit from high quality diagnosis or surgery services:

- 10.000 persons investigated for diabetes;
- 6.000 persons subjected to specific ophthalmological investigations, out of which 400 patients will be subjected to surgical therapy.

Other works, as described in the attached technical documentation.