

Prevention technologies – European prevention conference opens today

What do we know about how research evidence is used in the ‘real world’ of prevention? How can we take advantage of technology to promote the use of evidence in policy and practice? What are some of the biggest implementation challenges in prevention and how do we address these? These are among the questions being addressed this week at the 9th annual conference of the [European Society for Prevention Research \(EUSPR\)](#) (24–26 October). The event, ‘Prevention technologies – improving the use of evidence in prevention practice’, is co-organised in Lisbon by the EUSPR and the EMCDDA.

In many areas of public health, and particularly in the field of prevention, there is frequently a gap between research evidence and the services and interventions delivered in daily practice. This may mean that public resources are wasted or that target groups and communities are unable to receive the interventions or other support that might benefit them most.

At the conference, keynote speakers will explore some of the major issues in implementation and translational science as well as highlight strategies that have been successful in bringing together prevention research, practice and policymaking ⁽¹⁾. Looking at the use of new technologies in this process, speakers will address how these might offer fresh opportunities for delivering evidence-based interventions and programmes and provide a platform for better engagement across different sectors.

In addition to looking at what works in prevention, the conference will also pay attention to what does not, via a special session devoted to ‘Embracing failure in prevention science’. This will underline the importance of publishing trial results that show ‘no effects’ or ‘harmful effects’ in order to avoid ‘research waste’ and optimise performance.

The conference will map the obstacles that hinder the uptake and roll-out of effective interventions and local policies in preventing unhealthy behaviours. It will also increase dialogue between practitioners and researchers on how best to overcome them. In order to boost this dialogue, one of the pre-conference events will be a joint exchange activity sponsored by, and held at, the Lisbon City Hall. This will bring together early-career researchers and prevention professionals to discuss common goals and to air views on how evidence should be best presented and used.

The EMCDDA strives to support evidence-based prevention and to promote greater use of interventions which are proven to be effective. However, simply publishing evidence is not enough. This is why the agency proactively promotes training in prevention science and practice. Here, the agency is engaging in the further implementation in Europe of training curricula – such as the European Universal Prevention Curriculum (EUPC) – and is aware that good collaboration with networks of scientists and practitioners, such as the EUSPR, is important to achieve this goal.

In the margins of the meeting, the EMCDDA and the EUSPR will discuss [Xchange](#), the agency's online registry of evidence-based prevention programmes launched last October in its [Best Practice Portal](#). Through this registry, interested visitors can access empirically proven effective programmes, along with experiences of their adaptation across different countries. The EUSPR is supporting the EMCDDA in expanding this registry to include programmes targeting other risky behaviours such as delinquency and violence.