



The EU 'Healthier Together' Non-Communicable Diseases Initiative

Reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases

EU STRUCTURAL HEART DISEASE COALITION

BACKGROUND

Provide the rationale and background for your proposed action including challenges and enablers.

Structural Heart Disease (SHD) presents a significant burden in Europe, affecting an estimated 14 million people in 2020, with projections indicating a rise to over 20 million by 2040, largely due to the ageing population. SHD, primarily degenerative, cannot be prevented by lifestyles measures or medication, but can be effectively managed with early detection and intervention. However, routine heart checks are not widespread in Europe, leading to undiagnosed cases and preventable mortality. Henceforth, we propose implementing systematic heart checks for cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), including SHDs, across the EU.

In this context, systematic heart checks for cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), including Structural Heart Diseases (SHDs), are essential due to the rising burden of these conditions across Europe. Enablers include successful pilot SHD screening initiatives in the UK (see "[Farnborough Community Pharmacy Digital Stethoscope Pilot](#)") and Italy (see [PREvalence of cardioVASCular diseases](#)), which demonstrate the feasibility and benefits of early detection programs. Leveraging these initiatives can foster cross-border collaboration and facilitate the implementation of systematic heart checks.

CONCRETE ACTION

▪ **Idea:**

- *What are the objectives and the scope of the action?*

The action aims to address the growing burden of SHD by promoting heart check for the elderly population with the aim of reducing the burden of heart disease and improving the quality of life for Europeans. First steps could be sharing of experience and defining targets for heart checks.

▪ **EU added value and impact:**

- *What is the EU added value and impact of the action?*

Establishing a relevant action with targets for early detection of CVD, including SHD, will standardize preventive measures, reduce health inequalities, and enhance public health outcomes. Moreover, it will reduce

*How will this
action support
the prevention
of non-
communicable
diseases in the
EU?*

healthcare costs, and improve quality of life for EU citizens. Henceforth, implementing systematic heart checks will mitigate the impact of SHD, promote healthy ageing, and reduce preventable mortality.

CHALLENGES AND ENABLERS

- *Which issues will your action address on health promotion and prevention of non-communicable diseases in particular related to health determinants, or socio-economic, environmental, commercial determinants of health?*

The action targets challenges related to the ageing population and inequalities in detection and access to treatment. The difference between having SHD and being disease free can mean the difference between living a fully independent life and not being able to make it up a flight of stairs. SHD is also linked to gender, socioeconomic, geographic inequalities. Without early detection and timely treatment and intervention, its impact will only become higher.

How will it target specific challenges, and are there any enablers that can take your action forward?

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- *Provide your views on how your organisation can be involved and help in taking this idea forward.*

Our organisation can actively engage in advocating for policy changes, collaborating with stakeholders to provide expertise and develop guidelines and training programs for healthcare professionals, and raising awareness among the general public about the importance of early detection of CVDs, including SHDs. We will work closely with policymakers, healthcare providers, and community organisations to facilitate the implementation of systematic heart checks across the EU, thereby improving health outcomes and promoting healthy ageing.

What can your organisation do to put this idea in place?