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HR4ALL



HR4ALL aims to better understand the challenges and possible solutions to tackling the multifactorial dimensions of obesity and implement this in policies.



SOCIAL



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An interregional cooperation project for
improving **Social inclusion** policies

Project Partners

Municipality of Haderslev (DK)
Development center Murska Sobota (SI)
Gasol Foundation (ES)
Municipality of Sant Boi de Llobregat (ES)
PON - Partnership Overweight Netherlands (NL)
The Region of Southern Denmark (DK)
University Rehabilitation Institute, Republic of Slovenia (URI-Soča) (SI)

www.interregeurope.eu/hr4all

SUMMARY

Obesity has become a significant health challenge in the Region of Southern Denmark with over 55% of the population affected by overweight and obesity.

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POLICY BRIEF

Denmark

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1. Introduction to the Obesity challenge in Europe

Obesity is a major health and social problem. In Europe, 59% of adults are obese. Obesity is recognized as a multifactorial disease which increases the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. Furthermore, it is recognized that obesity also impacts mental health (55% higher risk of depression).

The proportion of obese adults in the partner countries is according to WHO (2019).

DK	NL	ES	SLO
50%	50%	54%	58%

Obesity also causes costs for society placing a strain on healthcare & social resources.

- Spending in Europe of €70Bn annually (estimated) for healthcare & productivity loss due to obesity. This stands for approximately 2-4 % of the total health expenditure in Europe (European Commission 2023).
- Addressing obesity requires participation of many different sectors. To ensure a holistic approach a variety of practitioners and stakeholders across the partner countries will be involved in the project.

2. The regional challenges of obesity in the Region of Southern Denmark

Obesity has become a significant health challenge in the **Region of Southern Denmark (RSD)** **with over 55 % of the population affected by overweight and obesity.**

This is a worrying trend as obesity has been linked to several health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer and mental health issues such as depression and eating disorders.

In the Region of Southern Denmark, the proportion of citizens with obesity is higher than the national average. Moreover, there has been a 5.7 % increase in the proportion of citizens with obesity from 2010 to 2021. The problem affects more men (61.7 %) than women (49.2 %) and there is a correlation with the level of education and employment status (higher among early retirees and people with lower level of education).

To reverse this evolving public health problem, the Region of Southern Denmark needs to focus on the key challenges with obesity treatment of related health issues for adults which include the:

- a) challenges in addressing the multifactorial nature of obesity (which requires a comprehensive and cross-sectoral approach)
- b) needs new approaches on how the municipalities should support obese patients with long-term health effects
- c) lack of cooperation between sectors in the health system.

The Region of Southern Denmark has 1.238.406 Citizens where of 55.438 live within The Municipality of Haderslev.

3. Policy Instrument

The Regional Healthcare Agreement 2024-2027 builds on a strong and development-oriented collaboration between municipalities, the region, the hospitals, and the general practitioners with the aim of developing the overall health care system and creating more equality in health for the entire population in the Region of Southern Denmark.

The policy instrument has equality in health as the primary vision and four themes to reach the vision:

- health prevention
- mental wellbeing
- smooth patient pathways
- unity between the general practitioner and the hospitals (somatic and psychiatric) and the municipalities working together to help patients to improve mental and physical health.

3.1 Status policies

- In the Regional Healthcare Agreement 2024-2027 there is an action plan targeting ***Children, Adolescents and Pregnant Women with Obesity, but there is a lack of focus on*** initiatives for adults with obesity who lacks the ability to effectively achieve the proposed objectives in the Healthcare Agreement
- Today there is The Southern Danish Overweight Initiative (***SDOI***), ***but this initiative ONLY addresses the somatic hospitals within the Region***. SDOI has been tested in

one hospital of the region and should be disseminated and implemented to the rest of the hospitals in the region. **Primary care is not included in the action plan**=> lacks specific measures and initiative for adults at both the municipal and regional level, hindering effective achievement of the agreement's objectives in what concerns obesity control.

3.2 In HR4ALL

The Danish partners will address the theme “We collaborate about more healthy years of life through health promotion and prevention” and the specific objective “halting the rise in obesity”.

We wish to address the policy gap and expect to be able to influence the revision of the action plan associated with the Regional Healthcare Agreement in 2027.

To support the achievement of this objective it requires action in the regional hospitals (somatic and psychiatric) and municipalities among others. Specifically, an action plan on initiatives for adults with obesity lacks the ability to effectively achieve the proposed objectives of the Health Agreement regarding obesity control. At the moment, only an action plan for Children, Adolescents and Pregnant Women with Obesity exists.

We expect to achieve this goal based on the experiences shared by the different regions involved in HR4All project (The Dutch model of a holistic approach for diagnosing and treating adults/children with obesity and Spain's experience in multicomponent community-based interventions to prevent obesity at a local level), Insight from the Municipality of Rotterdam (NL) and the University of Rehabilitation (SL) will play a crucial role in helping us understand interdisciplinary rehabilitation for vulnerable groups.

3.3 How will we do it

The Region of Southern Denmark intend together with the Municipality of Haderslev to design and implement:

1. a new program at the hospital and municipal level to establish a holistic screening service at the hospital - the South Danish Obesity Initiative - fostering increased cross-sectional collaboration among partners and prioritizing improved health for individuals affected by obesity/mental health issues.

2. a multidimensional program at MH, aiming to improve the health and mental wellbeing among people with a BMI ≥ 30 .

The revision will introduce preventive healthcare measures, strengthen collaborations between healthcare providers and community organizations, and enhance the cross-sectoral integration of obesity/mental health care within the healthcare system.

3.4 Conclusion

To design the two above mentioned projects, the Danish partners will leverage the experiences shared by the partners. Especially the Dutch model of a holistic approach for diagnosing and treating adults/children with obesity developed by PON and Gasol Foundation's experience in multicomponent community-based interventions to prevent obesity at a local level will be important sources of inspiration. Also, the insight from Municipality of Rotterdam and the University of Rehabilitation will play a crucial role in helping us to understand the interdisciplinary rehabilitation for vulnerable groups. This will be instrumental in our efforts to empower patients and enable them to maintain their work ability through our initiatives.

With these proactive approaches, we aim to improve our policy instrument, making it better prepared to provide comprehensive support, promote healthier behaviours, improving social inclusion and promoting integration in active life, ultimately leading to better overall health and productivity outcomes for the municipality's residents.

This policy report will be updated again at the latest in Semester 6 (2027).