

Report on the outcomes of a Short-Term Scientific Mission¹

Action number: CA18124

Grantee name: Hernando C. Gómez Prada

Details of the STSM

Title: International collaboration to investigate the sexual health of LGBT older people in residential care homes

Start and end date: 06/06/2023 to 14/06/2023

Description of the work carried out during the STSM

The STSM commenced with a meeting on Wednesday 6th June with my host, Dr. Georges Pavlidis, in order to elaborate a precise schedule of the work to be done during the week of the stay. During this meeting I was introduced to the rest of the team from the Ageing and Social change department of the University of Norrköping. I had the opportunity to explain my work at the University of Murcia and to understand better the work they are doing in Sweden in terms of sexual health, aging and Lgbt. Following the schedule presented previously on the workplan summary submitted to COST, we agreed to start working that same day after identifying potential areas for collaboration and to start searching online databases and reviewing academic journals to identify recent developments, challenges, and gaps in the existing research, providing a solid foundation for our joint task.

On the second day, through meetings with the department team and the comprehensive literature review, a deeper understanding of the current research landscape on the sexual health of LGBT older people in Sweden was achieved. This knowledge served as a basis for identifying areas of focus and potential research directions. That day we had an online meeting with the University of Murcia in order to start with the HORIZON-HLTH-2024-CARE-04 and determine the team that will lead the initiative and open the application to know the terms of the joint proposal and the partners needed for it.

On days 3 and 4, based on the findings from the literature review, an analysis was conducted to identify potential research questions and topics for further exploration. Challenges and opportunities associated with researching the sexual health of LGBT older people in nursing homes were also examined. Additionally, personal experiences from previous research conducted in Spain were shared, including research findings, challenges faced, and lessons learned. In parallel to the documentation work, we continue to work on the European call Access to health and care services for people in vulnerable situations, starting a one-page draft that we will use to invite other partners to join us.

¹ This report is submitted by the grantee to the Action MC for approval and for claiming payment of the awarded grant. The Grant Awarding Coordinator coordinates the evaluation of this report on behalf of the Action MC and instructs the GH for payment of the Grant.

On the last day we examined challenges and opportunities associated with researching the sexual health of LGBT older people in nursing homes that would be very useful to present the European call and finished the draft. We had a new online meeting with Murcia and this time the calendar for the next months of joint work was definitively closed and the letter was sent to the possible partners. Finally, I said goodbye to the whole department and we exchanged contact details to keep in touch and planned an online meeting for the following week to continue the work.

Description of the STSM main achievements and planned follow-up activities

The Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) conducted at Norrköping University successfully achieved its planned goals and expected outcomes, making a valuable contribution to the Action objective and deliverables. Furthermore, it laid the foundation for future follow-up collaborations. The STSM fulfilled its objective of contributing to ongoing research on the sexual health of LGBT older people. Through a comprehensive literature review and engagement with the research team at Norrköping University, the STSM deepened the understanding of developments, challenges, and gaps in this research field. Also, by analysing the literature review findings, the STSM successfully identified potential research questions and topics for further exploration.

The STSM facilitated knowledge exchange with the research team at Norrköping University. By sharing personal experiences and research findings from previous studies in Spain, insights were gained into the specific challenges and insights related to the Spanish context. This exchange of knowledge furthered the Action's goal of promoting collaboration and cross-cultural understanding.

The STSM has the potential to result in publications and future collaborations. Agreed plans for future follow-up collaborations have been established during the STSM. Connections were formed with researchers and sexual health professionals in Sweden, fostering opportunities for joint research projects and initiatives. The establishment of these collaborations supports the Action's objective of promoting international cooperation and knowledge exchange.

During the STSM at Norrköping University, a one-page draft for the European call on "Access to health and care services for people in vulnerable situations" was successfully developed. This

draft will be presented in September as part of the ongoing efforts to address the healthcare needs of vulnerable populations, including LGBT older people in residential care homes.

The draft highlights the importance of ensuring equitable access to health and care services for individuals in vulnerable situations, with a specific focus on the unique needs and challenges faced by LGBT older people. It emphasizes the significance of inclusive policies and practices that consider the intersectionality of identities, such as age, gender, and sexual orientation.

In the same spirit of the STSM, the project we are presenting will promote the collaborations between different stakeholders, including researchers, policymakers, healthcare providers, and LGBT organizations. With our project we will build networks and partnerships will facilitate the exchange of best practices, the development of innovative interventions, and the dissemination of knowledge.

Finally, I think it is important to point out that as a result of this stay, a link of union and collaboration has already been created with the University of Norrköping and Murcia and, in addition, as the previous year I was able to enjoy another STSM in Austria, at the University of Graz and I still have very good contacts there, the University of Graz will join the European call as a partner, which speaks of the effectiveness of this stay and the importance of this Cost Action of the European Sexual Medicine Network (ESMN) not only in my academic career, but also personally.