



## Welcome to the third issue of the PREDI-NU newsletter!

Close to the finalisation of our project Preventing Depression and Improving Awareness through Networking in the EU (PREDI-NU), we are pleased to present our project results. We invite you to contact us and collaborate with us in the dissemination and use of our project resources, which aim to improve the care for individuals experiencing mild to moderate depression.

Throughout the past three years, a multilingual, guided, internet-based self-management programme for patients with mild to moderate depression, the iFightDepression tool, has been developed, enhanced after pilot phase evaluation and implemented in six European regions. Additionally, the multilingual depression information and awareness website ([www.ifightdepression.com](http://www.ifightdepression.com)) was recently made available online and is currently available in nine languages.

This newsletter presents both the iFightDepression tool and website, and details how they will be used in the future. Implementation of the iFightDepression tool and website will be organised via the non-profit Association European Alliance Against Depression, as summarised in this newsletter. Please feel free to circulate this newsletter to colleagues with an interest in mental health promotion, depression and the prevention of suicidal behaviour. We welcome comments and queries to [info-predinu@eaad.net](mailto:info-predinu@eaad.net).



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## The third year of PREDI-NU: What have we achieved?

- The iFightDepression tool and materials for professional training workshops preceding its implementation are available in an enhanced version, based on outcomes from evaluation of the pilot phase of implementation. The development of an associated e-learning training programme for wider dissemination and implementation of the iFightDepression tool was commenced and will be finalised over the coming months.



The PREDI-NU Consortium at the final project meeting  
in Brussels, Belgium, April 2014

- [ifightdepression.com](http://ifightdepression.com), with multiple contents for different target audiences, was made available online in nine languages.
- iFightDepression was presented at an international Symposium in Brussels on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, which was attended by members of the European Parliament and officials from the European Commission.
- Information on the PREDI-NU project and iFightDepression tool was disseminated at several scientific meetings, including the EU workshop 'Public Mental Health Research - Bridging the Gap between Evidence and Policy' held in Brussels (January 2014) and the 22nd European Congress of Psychiatry in Munich (March 2014).

## Project coordinators



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## PREDI-NU Objectives

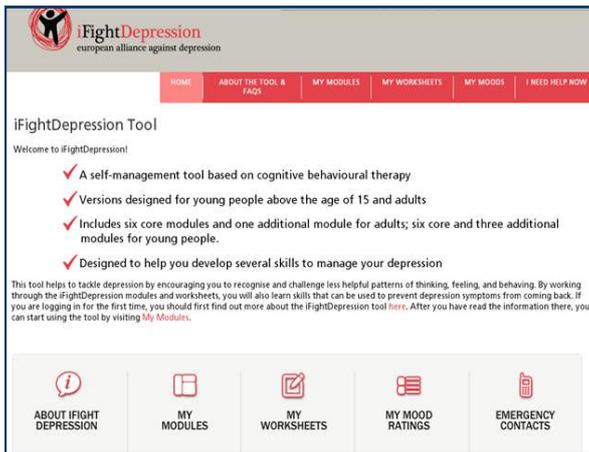
To develop the internet-based guided self-management **iFightDepression Tool** for young people (15-24 years) and adults with mild to moderate depression

To design an **iFightDepression website** including multi-faceted contents in nine languages to raise awareness of depression and suicidal behaviour ([www.ifightdepression.com](http://www.ifightdepression.com))

To implement and evaluate the **iFightDepression Tool** in six European regions

To integrate the **iFightDepression website** and the **iFightDepression Tool** within the 4-level intervention of EAAD

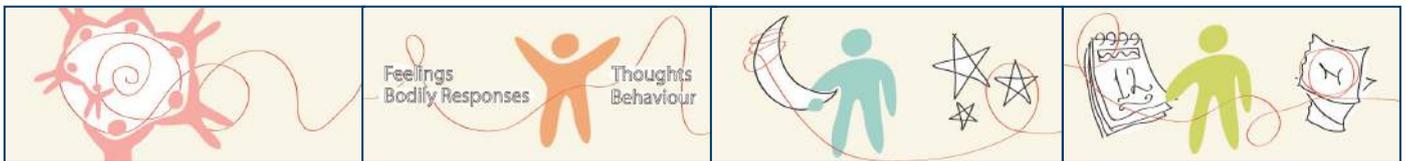
## The iFightDepression self-management tool: current status



Throughout the third year of PREDI-NU, the iFightDepression self-management tool was continuously enhanced and is currently available in the following languages: English, German, Estonian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Spanish, Catalan.

The tool is based on the principles of cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) and helps to tackle depression by encouraging patients to recognise and challenge unhelpful patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving. The iFightDepression tool empowers patients by virtue of its focus on increasing the capacity of individuals to self-manage their symptoms of depression with guidance from their healthcare professional, and also affords healthcare professionals a free additional resource for effectively managing and treating depression within their practice.

The iFightDepression tool consists of clearly arranged and colloquial text modules supported by graphics. Additionally, worksheets are offered for homework and personal exercises to encourage self-monitoring and consolidation of the skills being learned. The main changes that were incorporated within the enhanced version of the tool include shortened and revised texts, improved worksheets, the addition of graphics and several improvements in both navigation and usability of the tool.



The modules of the optimised iFightDepression tool are as follows: **1.** Thinking, feeling and doing, **2.** Sleep and depression, **3.** Planning and doing things that you enjoy, **4.** Getting things done, **5.** Identifying negative thoughts, **6.** Changing negative thoughts and **7.** Feel better all round: healthy lifestyle. The enhanced iFightDepression tool retains additional optional modules for young people on: Social anxiety; and Social relationships. The modules can be accessed and worked through at the users' convenience and they are encouraged to work at their own pace.

## iFightDepression tool: benefits, use and value



PREDI-NU focused on evaluating the acceptability of the iFightDepression tool to both healthcare professionals and patients in addition to feasibility of its use, as there is little evidence regarding the acceptability and feasibility of existing online CBT-based programmes. To date, 156 healthcare professionals have been trained to use the FightDepression tool, and 198 patients have used the tool. Quantitative and qualitative measures were applied to assess the expectations, experiences and views of professionals and patients. In particular, data obtained from focus groups and personal interviews gave a detailed picture of the acceptability and feasibility of the tool, as well as the benefits of its use.

As a result, we know that the iFightDepression tool is not only of help for patients with mild to moderate depression, but is also likely to be helpful for those who:

1. have recovered from a severe form of depression (relapse prevention);
2. suffer from hearing impairments; and
3. present with a physical illness or disability and are experiencing limited mobility.

The following quotes from focus groups further illustrate the benefits and value of the iFightDepression tool:

*"...What I especially liked about the tool was the module about integrating positive activities into daily routine. Often, if other things (like school) seem very important, it's easy not to pay yourself enough attention. But now I think about doing things that I enjoy and that I like. I didn't do this before"* - **Tool user (age 17), Germany**

*"...I think that this programme, especially while waiting for face-to-face therapy or as continuation after psychotherapy, could be a good support for depressed people"* - **Tool user (age 43), Germany**

*"I celebrated my 60th birthday last week. For me, the tool was a real challenge and I was wondering if I would be able to work with an online self-help programme. I'm happy that I was able to do it"* - **Tool user (age 60), Hungary**

*"The tool could give people a greater belief in their own ability... they can work through a programme themselves and learn skills and practice it... that's powerful for a person."* - **Healthcare professional, Ireland.**

## ifightdepression.com: improving knowledge and awareness of depression and suicidal behaviour throughout Europe

We proudly present the iFightDepression information and awareness website, [www.ifightdepression.com](http://www.ifightdepression.com). This multifaceted, multilingual website aims to raise awareness of depression and suicidal behaviour, to improve knowledge and attitudes regarding depression and suicidal behaviour, and to promote help-seeking and mental health.

The iFightDepression website contains a service area, mood-rating questionnaire and the password-restricted iFightDepression tool, in addition to information on:

- Depression and suicidal behaviour
- Information on local and regional helplines and support services
- Helpful strategies for depression, including self-management resources.

The information and recommendations are tailored to specific target audiences: the general public, young people, family and friends of individuals experiencing depression, community professionals and healthcare professionals. The inclusion of such tailored information is important in light of results from the multi-level intervention of the European Alliance Against Depression demonstrating:

- a) The importance of raising awareness of depression with community professionals and 'gatekeepers', such as teachers, pharmacists and police officers, who may be the first point-of-contact with a depressed or suicidal individual and who can facilitate appropriate access to care.
- b) The importance of increasing knowledge and awareness of depression with healthcare professionals, to ensure that milder forms of depression are recognised, as well as depression that is 'masked' by physical symptoms.



## What will be next: sustainability and future of iFightDepression

We see it as our responsibility to continue with what was achieved during PREDI-NU and to disseminate the project results on a long-term basis after the project ends in August 2014. All PREDI-NU products, including the iFightDepression tool, the iFightDepression awareness website and professional training materials for implementation of the tool, will be administered through the European Alliance Against Depression (EAAD, [www.eaad.net](http://www.eaad.net)) from September 2014 onwards to ensure sustainability of the resources. The EAAD comprises an international network of experienced researchers dedicated to the improvement of care for depressed patients and the prevention of suicidal behaviour, and has been operating as a non-profit organisation on a sustainable basis since 2008.



In preparation for the transition of project resources from PREDI-NU to EAAD, an initial task will involve the integration of an e-learning iFightDepression training programme within the iFightDepression website for healthcare professionals who wish to use the tool with patients. The programme is currently being developed and will be finalised over the coming months. It will advise as to how the tool can be implemented, guided and integrated within daily practice. Please email us at [contact@eaad.net](mailto:contact@eaad.net) if you are interested in the online iFightDepression training programme.

Additionally, we plan to continuously update and improve the iFightDepression website, which will shortly also include Italian and Dutch versions. We welcome any potential further partners to become involved in the implementation of iFightDepression, in addition to suggestions or feedback about the iFightDepression resources, via [contact@eaad.net](mailto:contact@eaad.net).

## Crossing the bridge between researchers, clinicians and politicians: presentation of the iFightDepression tool to members of the European Parliament

The iFightDepression tool was presented at the successful international Symposium, *'iFightDepression: E-Self-Management of Depression in the Context of Current and Future Mental Health Programmes'*, that was organised by the PREDI-NU Consortium and held in Brussels on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2014. The Symposium was preceded by a Press Conference in the European Parliament. Both events aimed to generate discussion on mental health policy and the future of e-self-management within the EU.

The Symposium and Press Conference involved a forum of key political stakeholders and international experts in mental health, including Mr. Jürgen Schefflein and Dr. Terje Peetso (policy officers in the European



Professor Ella Arensman presenting the iFightDepression tool at the International Brussels Symposium, April 1st 2014



Professor Ulrich Hegerl presenting at the International Brussels Symposium, April 1st 2014

Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers and the Unit for Health and Wellbeing respectively), Professor Lars Mehlum (University of Oslo), Professor Ad Kerkhof (VU University, Amsterdam), Dr. Richard Seeber and Mr. Brian Crowley (Members of European Parliament). In addition, a valuable personal perspective on the potential benefits of internet-based interventions and recommendations for their use was provided by Mr. Thomas Müller-Rörich of Deutsche DepressionsLiga, a patient organisation.

In an encouraging atmosphere of researchers and professionals committed to working collaboratively towards improving the care of depression and promoting mental health, key topics and recommendations were discussed during both events. These included the need for interaction and co-operation between legislators, researchers and mental health professionals to ensure sustainability of

research, the importance of complementarity between digital healthcare and traditional healthcare and the importance of involving service users in discussions of mental health issues.

## Evaluating the effectiveness of the iFightDepression tool: upcoming research in Spain



**iFightDepression**  
european alliance against depression

From September 2014 onwards, a randomised controlled clinical trial (RCT) to evaluate the iFightDepression tool will be undertaken in Spain, under the coordination of Professor Víctor Pérez and funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness. The estimated length of the study is three years, and it aims to assess the effects and the efficacy of the iFightDepression tool in reducing depressive

symptomatology in patients experiencing mild to moderate depression. The RCT is multi-centric and will involve five public hospitals and associated primary care and mental health services based in Catalonia, Madrid and the Basque Country. It is expected that 310 patients with a diagnosis of mild to moderate depression will be included within the study. Patients will be randomly allocated to either of two intervention groups: a treatment group using the iFightDepression tool and receiving treatment-as-usual (psychotherapy and/or pharmacotherapy); and a control group receiving a psycho-educational online intervention based on clinical guidelines in addition to treatment-as-usual.

Evaluation will involve assessment of depressive symptomatology, changes in clinical severity, quality of life and functionality. It is expected that, whilst both interventions will be useful in reducing clinical symptomatology, patients within the iFightDepression group will show a greater improvement in clinical and health-related variables.

## Upcoming events

- The iFightDepression tool will be presented at the 7<sup>th</sup> Scientific Meeting for the International Society for Research on Internet Interventions (ISRII), Valencia, 23<sup>rd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> October 2014.
- Presentation of the iFightDepression tool has been proposed for the 28<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP), Montréal, 16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

The PREDI-NU Consortium is sincerely grateful for the continuous support of the PREDI-NU Scientific Advisory Board, Expert Panel and local Advisory Panels. We also gratefully acknowledge the participation of healthcare professionals and individuals experiencing depression who supported the implementation and evaluation of the iFightDepression tool throughout PREDI-NU.