

Roma and primary health care

Belgian experiences

1. Diabetes type 2: frequent disorder at a very Young age: starts at +/- 35 year
 - + explain and re-explain the patho-physiology: emphasis the power they have to tackle this
 - + frequent follow-up and control of compliance: best at least weakly
 - + try to find partnership in younger better integrated members of the family
 - + gain confidence of the elderly in the society, especially the Nona
 - + to get things for free: seem often the best motivation for some efforts
 - Missing appointments
 - Change food habits and physical exercise
 - Insuline en needles
2. Obesitas en children's food pattern
 - +/-: if you can reach the grandmother, more chance of change
 - + educate, inform: importance milk and water intake
 - Change food pattern of adults, especially ma
3. Physical exercise
 - No success in motivation to do recreational activities

 - + some successes in motivating parents (mostly mothers) to take their children to school by foot
4. Low back pain
 - + explain and illustrate the problem: mostly caused by weakness of muscles of back and belly + early arthroses; comparable with the pain pregnant women have at the end of their pregnancy
 - + repeat the same message
 - Message, most men want, it's difficult to motivate them for physical exercise
5. Family planning

- Female autonomy: most problematic for the daughters in law, that have no contact anymore with their family of birth
- + IUD placed on request of the woman without the consent or knowledge by the husband or mother in law

6. Dental care

- + free preventive care for children
- Not known, importance not seen: do not come before problems appear

7. Truancy and education

- + try to help them see the advantages of education
- They seem to see little advantages in education:
 - o the girls have to be mother (often at ages 15-16) and help in the household
 - o the boys hope to have their own business, if they already feel motivated to work
- no idea to motivate the girls as long as they seem happy with the traditional roll: maybe good to explain relation between the health of children and the degree of education of the mother: roll of the grandmother of the girls seems more important here.
- + possible to stimulate boys by listening to their goals and help them to see ways to reach this: seems important that the father or grandmother also understands importance of education

8. Domestic violence

- Very difficult to tackle, hopefully it improves with better women education and trust in society
- + Try to have alliance with the grandmother

9. Preventive health care: mammography and pap smear

- Not seen as useful, need to have an idea of the prevalence in their communities: probably not a health priority
- Success and prevalence in Roma in Slovakia?

10. disability application

- See it as an advantage to get money not to work, seem to have no problem with the label of disabled person
- How long can you keep on motivating them, what can help to keep them out this unhealthy position?

Community based approach

1. Respect their culture and do not try to change everything
 2. Start with the “felt needs” of the Roma itself
 3. Search and discuss “priorities” for the health of the Roma (WHO: complete social, physical and mental well being)and for the community: “real needs”
 4. Try to understand their way of thinking, to look at problems from their perspective. Health or disease is not in their control, it happens to them and society or external factors need to solve it. Difficult to empower them and motivate them to tackle the problem themselves.
 5. Do not feel frustrated when goals are not reached. Anger does not help and felt frustration seems to work contra-productive.: It makes them feel more Roma and less part of society.
 6. Preventive dental care in children, integrate with child en family preventive consultations: importance of vaccinations is known and this consultations are used by the Roma Community
 7. School can help to promote preventive care: good transition from baby and toddler too pre-school and school children’s age
 8. Reward school attendance, school bus,...
 9. Physical exercise for youth and adults: search recreational activities of their interest
 - 10.Promote healthy food instead of or in relation to other grants: eg vegetable subscription, free milk subscription at school,...
 11. Adult education: for illiterates, language course,... as condition for certain privileges
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