



Welcome the 2nd edition of the iSIMPATHY newsletter.

The €3.5 million cross-border iSIMPATHY project designed to transform the approach to optimisation of medicines in the three project jurisdictions is now in its final year. To date **over 4,300** patients have benefited from the medicine reviews undertaken by trained health care professionals, across the three jurisdictions. The iSIMPATHY approach is proving to be a very successful model, with substantial benefits and acceptability.

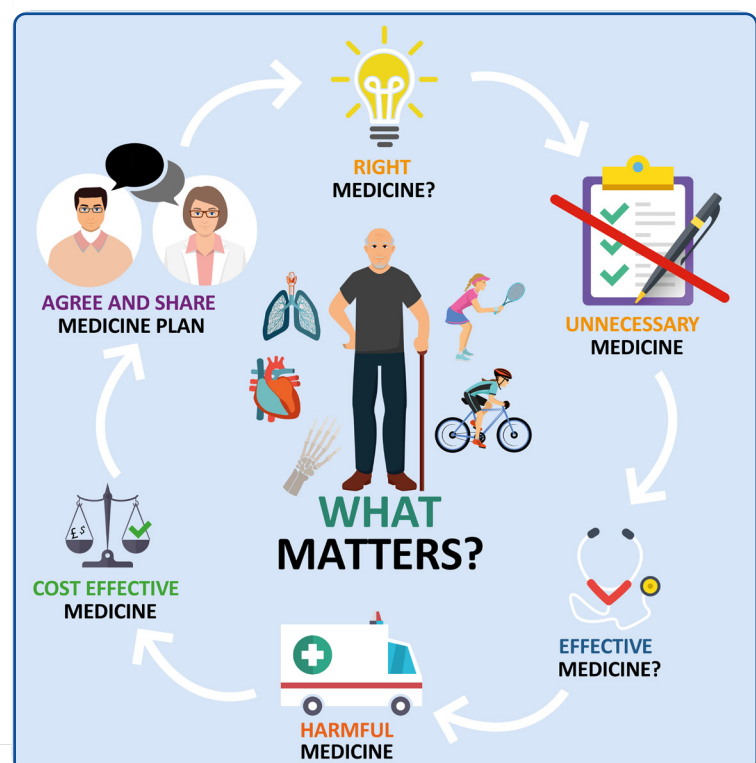
Highlighting the impact of the project so far, Ciara Kirke, Clinical Lead for the National Medication Safety Programme with the Health Service Executive said: **“The iSIMPATHY project is enabling the delivery of a brand new model of quality, clinical care in Donegal, Sligo, Cavan, Monaghan, Leitrim and Louth. For the first time in the Republic of Ireland, outside of a research setting, we are delivering comprehensive medicine reviews to people who most benefit from them. These reviews are person-centred and holistic, delivered by project pharmacists working in primary care, within GP practices. We are seeing a reduction in the risk of medication-related harm, improvements in patient quality of life, greater understanding of medicines through patient education and considerable savings as a result of reviews.”**

Prof Mike Scott, Director of Medicines Optimisation Innovation Centre (MOIC), Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT), reiterated the benefits shown so far and how these indicate the future potential of the iSIMPATHY approach: **“The project is making a difference to people, with initial broad scans of data demonstrating expected benefits which will support the ongoing scale and spread into different clinical settings.”**

Scottish Government Project Lead Alpana Mair said **“The project enables patients to access person-centred reviews asking “what matters to you?”**

and uses shared decision making tools so that patients are partners in decision making about their medications. We know across the UK that medicines can contribute to almost 11% of hospital admissions and that these reviews reduce inappropriate prescribing of medication associated with harm. This project ensures that all three countries actively address the WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge, Medication without harm. Over four thousand patients have benefited so far, with many more patients due to benefit over the next 9 months.”

The iSIMPATHY project is delivering the key principles of the WHO Third Global Patient Safety Challenge, Medication without harm.



iSIMPATHY ECHO network

Want to get involved – why don't you join the iSIMPATHY ProjectECHO NI network. The ECHO network offers a peer support and shared learning environment for the iSIMPATHY pharmacists. Throughout the lifespan of the project the network will expand to accommodate HCPs who are excited to learn more about iSIMPATHY as well as those trained in the methodology. The pharmacists share case studies to determine what works well in each of their jurisdictions as well as learning from invited experts. The network also considers the impact of the reviews on adherence. Visit [MOIC iSimpathy - Echo Northern Ireland](#) for more information or contact a member of the team to get you registered.



Launch of HCP Training Modules

Building on the impact of the work accomplished so far, the project has recently launched a new polypharmacy training course '**Evidence based polypharmacy reviews and the 7 step process**' aimed at healthcare professionals including doctors, nurses and pharmacists. The training course will equip them to develop the knowledge and skills required to enable comprehensive person centred medicine reviews to be undertaken.

Funded by the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), 'iSIMPATHY' aims to ensure that optimal outcomes are achieved with medication use in those patients with more than one long-term illness using a person-centered approach. It is enabling eligible patients to live healthy and active lives by supporting both them and clinicians in defining and achieving realistic goals of drug treatment through medicine reviews.

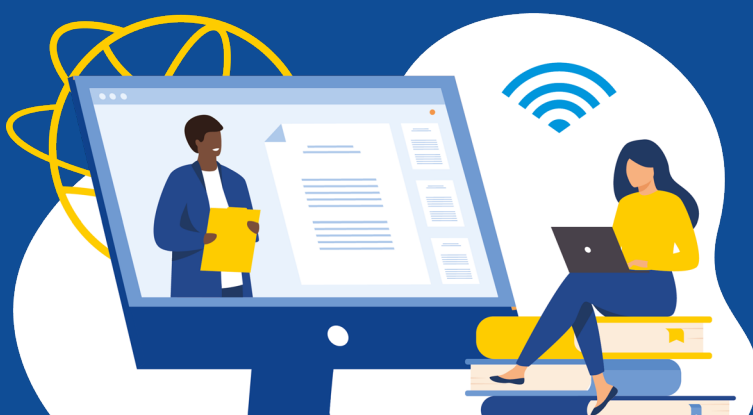
The 'Evidence based Polypharmacy reviews and the 7 step process' training course is available on NHS Education for Scotland via learn.nes.nhs.scot/ or if you are outside Scotland you will find more information on how to access this course via the website www.isimpathy.eu/resource

The training has been accredited with 3 points of external CPD by Royal College of Physicians, UK and includes material on optimising and rationalising medicines using the '7 steps' medication review process. The '7 steps' is centred on what matters to the patient and the effective use of medicines. There are three 45 minute modules and short multiple choice assessments. A series of webinars and additional resources are also available to complement the training.

This polypharmacy training course will complement the suite of resources the project has developed which include:

- Animations explaining how medicine reviews put the patient at the centre of their own care, how patients can get involved and the benefits they may see. www.isimpathy.eu/resources
- A website with information for healthcare professionals and patients about the iSIMPATHY medicine reviews providing personalised assessments of patients' medicine needs, www.isimpathy.eu
- Peer support including the launch of a series of shared learning events

An **in person training session** is taking place during November 2022 in Monaghan. Send an email to nss.isimpathy@nhs.scot to register interest



Shared Learning Event

The latest iSIMPATY shared learning event took place virtually on 7th June 2022. We welcomed over forty attendees and presenters to the event and it was a great success.



The event concentrated on the success of the project to date, as well as the legacy of the project. We heard from a selection of iSIMPATY Project Board Members and Work Package Leads from across Scotland, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland; on the impact iSIMPATY has had in their area and what the project meant to them.

To ensure attendees were involved in the event, we held two interactive workshops where attendees were encouraged to collaborate and share their ideas and opinions on the topic of 'Incorporating iSIMPATY into daily practice' or 'Lessons taken from delivering iSIMPATY and medicines optimisation through COVID-19 into Sustainable scale-up'. Some great discussions took place that really explored these two themes.

Medicines optimisation through COVID-19 into sustainable scale-up

Covid gave us a challenge initially to build rapport with patients and colleagues via physical barriers of PPE gear to social distancing but it also gave us opportunities. A great benefit of the project delivery during covid was the 'gift of time' to the patients especially those in hospital where a lot of 'people were struggling' due to restrictions and having no one to talk to. The pharmacists were able to have an opportunity to conduct a holistic patient centred medicines review with them and signposting them to other services and MDTs as needed. Another benefit was to conduct patient reviews over the phone and in turn increase the number of medicines reviews delivered. Some of the advantages

to this included: patients were not inconvenienced to attend the surgery in person, the appointment was made at a time suitable for the patient, and the practice did not have to find suitable accommodation therefore, improved access to the patients. This model works and is sustainable even though face-to-face reviews are offered to patients almost all agree to conduct the review over the phone.



Incorporating iSIMPATY into daily practice

Discussions took place in regards to the scalability of the project and the advantage it would be to have all pharmacists as prescribers especially in general practice. A lot of experience has been gathered to date and learnings as to how the pharmacists have integrated their work into the model within practices and they are now embedded into the service. There is work needed to clarify care pathways, roles and responsibilities to increase buy in from some health care professionals. The project has empowered and given confidence to the pharmacists. They are now encouraging other colleagues to undertake the recently launched Polypharmacy training course to spread the use of the '7 Steps Process'. For more information on the course see: www.isimpathy.eu/resources.

Guest speakers and project staff also presented at the event. We heard touching patient stories from beneficiaries of the project, which were an excellent way to show the real life impact of iSIMPATY. Overall, the shared learning event was extremely successful. Attendees levels of engagement and participation were high throughout the day. Evaluation data collected following the event showed that 66.7% of these attendees were 'extremely satisfied' and the remaining 33.3% were 'very satisfied' with the event, which is a testimony to the events success.

The next iSIMPATY shared learning event will be held on 24th November 2022, in-person, in the Republic of Ireland. We look forward to welcoming you to this next opportunity for collaboration and knowledge sharing!

Link to recording vimeo.com/720285612/06815d060c



[iSIMPATY website](#) Here you'll find information on project partners and a bank of resources to support your work and share with stakeholders. There's also a section for patients and carers for you to signpost to. We'll be adding project updates, case studies, reflections and learning in our news section.

If you have something you'd like to share about the work you've been doing on iSIMPATY, please [get in touch](#). Or follow us on twitter for the latest news and updates