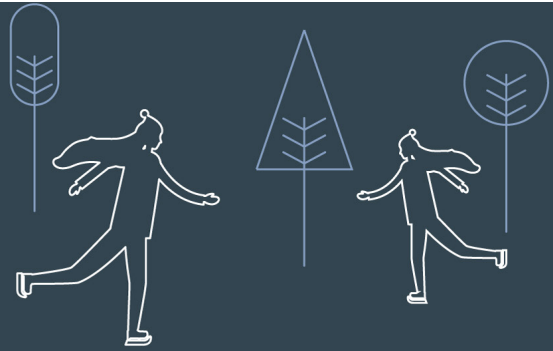


OptiMedium

Newsletter
Issue February 2021



Editorial

About OptiMedis and our projects

Promoting health and connecting sectors: "Healthy Schwalm-Eder District+" breaks ground!

The "DIGILO" digital platform will help you find what you need

OptiMedis, vdek, and DNGfK support training for occupational health in hospitals and care facilities

Common practice in the region and the individual patient: FORTA-EPI and MyFORTA uncover potential for improvement

Self-Management Europe – A new initiative to support patients

Large OECD study on the care of chronically ill patients – OptiMedis is part of the international consortium

At a glance

OptiMedis is one of the top employers in the German medium-sized business sector

eJourney: OptiMedis AG's successful integrated care networks in Germany

Helping decision makers making informed judgements: COMPAR-EU decision-making tools

Publications

Events where you can meet us

Editorial responsibility

Editorial

Dear Readers, dear Friends,

COVID-19 continues to take a toll on all of us. While there are positive developments, such as the availability of several vaccines developed in record time, it will take a while before lock-downs are eased and work and life return to a somewhat more "normal" situation. At current, the C-19 toll on society remains visible mostly in the number of infections, hospital admissions, ICU utilization and case fatality rates. These figures are also the most visible ones in existing C-19 dashboards. However, as we are all aware, C-19 affects all areas of public and private life and the burden on health professionals, but also teachers and in particular children is significant. The choice of indicators to assess the evolution and management of the C-19 epidemic should therefore be reflected carefully and we are delighted to embark on such a project together with the HealthPros Network and WHO. We are further content that our project on improving workplace health promotion that we planned even before C-19 is now starting, given health professionals the opportunity to introduce health promoting changes to their organizations.

New integrated care region in Hesse / Germany

The immediate future will bring further challenges for health systems. Health system managers will need to balance scarce resources to address old and new challenges: "old" challenges embracing efficiencies in care organization and the burden of chronic disease, "new" challenges including yet unknown demands on health care systems due to secondary effects of C-19 and the impact of foregone care (elective surgeries being cancelled, cancer screenings delayed, routine health check-ups missed etc). In addition, the aftermath of widening inequalities during various lock-down periods which inevitably will manifest their effects in the coming months and years. In this context, the need to better integrate care pathways and address population health factors seems more relevant than ever. With the support of the B. Braun Melsungen AG we are therefore delighted to have won a partner to establish a new integrated care region and to further invest in our health care digitization strategy.

New initiative: Self-Management Europe

In managing complex health issues, the role of citizens, (digital) health literacy and self-management skills will be a key to success. We are thrilled to establish the new reference centre Self-Management Europe together with our partners NIVEL, Avedis Donabedian Institute and the European Patient Forum. We are also proud to continue our work in implementing the Patient-reported Indicators Survey for the OECD to give patients a central role in the evaluation of health services.

Finally, if these challenges were not enough, they may appear small in comparison to challenges associated with the climate crisis. We believe that the health care sector can make an important contribution to reducing climate

impact and are pleased that the new Health Promoting Hospital and Health Services Standards now include items addressing this major topic. With all sectors of society realizing their role, the health risks stemming from climate change can be mediated.

We hope you will enjoy reading about our new projects addressing these and other challenges!

Sincerely yours,

Oliver Gröne, PhD, Vice Chairman of the Board at OptiMedis



About OptiMedis and our projects

Promoting health and connecting sectors: "Healthy Schwalm-Eder District+" breaks ground!



Mario Heußner,
Chairman of the BKK
B. Braun Aesculap. Photo:
BKK. B. Braun Aesculap

Northern Hesse is developing into a pioneer for new care solutions. After success in the Werra-Meißner district, neighboring Schwalm-Eder district is also implementing OptiMedis' regional integrated care model. This is supported by a contract between BKK B. Braun Aesculap and "Gesunder Schwalm-Eder-Kreis+ GmbH", of which OptiMedis is a shareholder.

"The innovative model implemented in the Kinzigtal region and, for some time now, in our neighbouring Werra-Meißner district in northern Hessen has convinced us, and we trust OptiMedis' many years of expertise. We really want to make a difference in healthcare provision and promotion in the region," explains Mario Heußner, Chairman of the Board of BKK B. Braun Aesculap.



Anna Maria Braun, Chair-
woman of the B. Braun
Melsungen AG. Photo: B.
Braun Melsungen AG

For Anna Maria Braun, CEO of B. Braun Melsungen AG, the issues of maintaining and promoting the health of employees and their families are important components of the company's philosophy. "The new offer helps to protect and improve the health of our employees – a vision that has always driven B. Braun. We particularly welcome the approach of using digital solutions to reach people in rural areas.

This way, not only people in Melsungen and the surrounding area will be able to use the network's health services, but gradually also insured people and employees beyond the region and the Schwalm-Eder district," she explains. The "+" in the name also reflects this ambition.

B. Braun leads the way: Regional companies should invest more in health



Justin Rautenberg, CEO of
the „Gesunder Schwalm-
Eder-Kreis+ GmbH“. Photo:
OptiMedis

OptiMedis' Chairman of the Board Dr. h. c. Helmut Hildebrandt views B. Braun's commitment as an example for other regions: "After a certain start-up period, healthcare networks such as the one we are setting up pay for themselves through their share of the relative savings that result from more efficient and coordinated care. Ultimately, by promoting health and detecting diseases early or mitigating their progression, the cost of medical care decreases in the long run. Regional companies can play a substantial role in seed funding, making a large difference in care for their region and their people."

Justin Rautenberg, Managing Director of "Gesunder Schwalm-Eder-Kreis+ GmbH", explains that policyholders will be able to take advantage of the network's first offerings as early as the beginning of 2021. "We are currently setting up the office, building a team, and establishing contacts with medical and social institutions. In addition to classic healthcare offerings, we plan to increasingly rely on digital solutions in the future."

In order to enable as many insured persons from the Schwalm-Eder district as possible to benefit from the advantages of the health network, contracts will be concluded with additional health insurance companies in the region.

[Click here to visit the Healthy Schwalm-Eder District website!](#)

The "DIGILO" digital platform will help you find what you need



The DIGILO mascot from the Healthy Werra-Meißner District. Photo: Healthy Werra-Meißner district

The "Gesunder Werra-Meißner-Kreis" network has launched a "Digital Health Guide", or DIGILO for short. DIGILO is a free internet platform that assists users in exploring more than 1400 health offers in Eschwege and the surrounding region. The service includes doctors, therapists, nutritionists, clubs, pharmacies, fitness providers and many more.

"With GWMK's DIGILO platform, interested parties can quickly and easily choose and display health offers in their local area. Information can be accessed at any time – for many, this is a great first step towards doing something for their own health," says Dr. Rainer Wallmann, First District Commissioner and Head of Health in the district "The search results are displayed on an interactive map and sorted by category for further clarity," adds Fritz Arndt, Care Manager for "Gesunder Werra-Meißner-Kreis GmbH".

However, DIGILO is not only a service for interested residents in the region; it is also being used to support 49 community health guides and community nurses with their consultations throughout the Werra-Meißner district. The geo-coded concept for the DIGILO platform was developed by OptiMedis and can be applied in different regions. If you are interested, please send an e-mail to kommunikation@optimedis.de.

[Click here to see the DIGILO platform!](#) [And here to see the explanatory video with the DIGILO mascot!](#)

OptiMedis, vdek and DNGfK support training for occupational health in hospitals and care facilities

OptiMedis, the Association of Substitute Health Funds (in German: Verband der Ersatzkassen e.V. (vdek), and the DNGfK (German Network of Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Care Services), are preparing for the launch of a training series to support hospitals and care facilities in implementing workplace health promotion. The training series, which will begin in March 2021, will focus on operational framework conditions for creating successful occupational health management. 20 institutions have been invited to participate at no cost.



*Ulrike Elsner, vdek Chair.
Photo: vdek/Georg J. Lopata*

Workplace health promotion is important – not only during the Corona pandemic

"The Corona pandemic has once again shown us how important it is to support and protect employees in healthcare facilities to ultimately safeguard patient care. Workplace health promotion plays an important role in this and vdek wants to support hospitals and care facilities in this effort," says Ulrike Elsner, vdek Chair.



Oliver Gröne, PhD, Vice Chairman of the Board at OptiMedis. Photo: OptiMedis

The training series is targeted towards employees in hospitals and (partially) inpatient care facilities. Participants begin with courses in health management, healthy leadership, and healthy work and lifestyle behaviors and conclude the program with the implementation of an occupational health project in their respective institutions.

Oliver Gröne, PhD, Vice Chairman of the Board at OptiMedis, comments: "We will combine innovative quality improvement methods with a focus on workplace health promotion. In doing so, we will utilize a blended learning approach combining face-to-face teaching and e-learning." This flexible approach and implementation of a project allows participants to apply concepts in the course to their current work environment. The implementation aspect of the course will guide participants in forming a quality improvement collaborative (QIC) in their institution, an approach in which a group of people collaborate to find the most sustainable solution to a problem. This will be the first known project in Germany to utilize the use of QICs to improve employee workplace health.

Common practice in the region and the individual patient: FORTA-EPI and MyFORTA uncover potential for improvement



The FORTA-EPI data-based algorithm can be used to evaluate drug supply in terms of underuse and overuse based on the FORTA list. Photo: istock / Halfpoint

Drug therapy for the elderly is perhaps one of the greatest challenges facing physicians. Risks, serious side effects, and interactions must be avoided, while at the same time opportunities, such as stroke prevention, must be pursued.

Together with Prof. Dr. Martin Wehling, pharmacologist and geriatrician from the University Hospital of Mannheim, OptiMedis has developed an algorithm based on the FORTA classification, in which active ingredients are evaluated in conjunction with age-relevant indicators. The algorithm evaluates drug supply at the regional and

practice levels in terms of underuse and overuse. Patient-specific evaluation is also possible via the recently developed MyFORTA tool. In addition to diagnoses and medications, other clinical parameters such as pain perception or Hb level can be assessed.

High health economic potential

The FORTA algorithm that was developed can likewise be used for retrospective analyses by health insurance companies, associations of statutory health insurances, physicians, pharmaceutical portals, and research projects, as well as for support in decision-making, especially for physicians and clinics. The health economic potential is high, as shown by our case studies on "hospitalizations due to femoral neck fracture (e.g. ICD code S72.0) after previous medication with benzodiazepines" and on "hospitalizations due to acute gastrointestinal bleeding after previous medication with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs". The case studies, including health economic projections, can be found [using this link \(German\)](#).

[Our website \(German\)](#) describes the application options and the case studies in detail. On a restricted page which requires registration (without further obligation), you can access interactive visualizations of our evaluations. [Click here to access the restricted site \(German\)](#)

If you have any questions or would like more information in English about a specific offer, please contact:

Pascal Wendel, Head of Health Data Analytics

Phone: 040 22621149-0

E-mail: p.wendel@optimedis.de

Self-Management Europe – A new initiative to support patients

Research partners set up a new European Research and Innovation Centre on Patient Empowerment and Self-Management: Self-Management Europe. Self-Management Europe will be a spin-off the EU funded research collaboration COMPAR-EU project.

The centre aims to develop the potential of people, professionals, organizations, systems, and communities for creating a society that strengthens empowerment and self-management in people with chronic diseases. Through capacity building, the centre will provide knowledge, skills, motivation and competency to people to act as leaders of self-management and empowerment enhancement in everyday life to improve health and quality of life for all.



*The new research and innovation centre will bring together research findings on self-management and self-determination and put them into practice.
Photo: istock | Morsa Images*

The Centre is a Joint Venture initiative formed by a multidisciplinary team led by the [Avedis Donabedian Research Institute \(FAD\)](#), the [Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research \(Nivel\)](#), and, Optimedis and working in collaboration with its affiliate members: The Institute for Medical Technology Assessment (iMTA), the Netherlands, Iberoamerican Cochrane Centre, Fundacio privada institut de recerca de L'hospital de la Santa creu i Sant pau (Spain), University of Ioannina (UOI), Greece, and European Patient Forum as endorsement organisation.

The motivation for Self-Management Europe

Whilst there are various ongoing initiatives in Europe to support self-care and self-management, the centre will address a critical gap: the translation of research findings into routine clinical practice. Through our expertise in translational research, implementation science and innovation management the partners are well positioned to address this gap.

Dr Carola Orrego from the Avedis Donabedian Research Institute and COMPAR-EU project coordinator states: "Our mission is to help stakeholder's decision-making by providing, creating and disseminating new and innovative knowledge for better self-management and patient empowerment with a special emphasis on chronic conditions." Dr Monique Heymans at Nivel adds: "The amount, and quality of research on supporting patients to take an active role in their care is increasing. We need a stronger focus on translating this research into new initiatives and implementation projects". Dr Oliver Groene, Vice-Chairman of the Board at OptiMedis argues: "Self-management needs to take a much stronger role in practice. We will seek innovative ways to integrate research evidence in emerging technologies and overcome current barriers to self-management."

Self-Management Europe seeks to establish collaborations with research and health care industry partners to accelerate the implementation of evidence-based practice interventions. Likeminded individuals and organizations are welcome to contribute to this endeavour.

Further information under www.self-management.eu/researchcentre

HPH publishes new health promotion standards

The International Network of Health Promoting Hospitals & Health Services (HPH) has ratified new standards for health promotion. The five current standards highlight the role of leadership in health promotion, call for better access to health services (in terms of sociocultural aspects and organizational health literacy), patient-centred care that includes access to comprehensive health information, shared decision-making, and self-management support. They describe requirements for a health-promoting workplace and call for increased sustainability regarding long-term outcomes of clinical interventions and the environmental impact of hospitals and health services.



The HPH network brings together more than 600 hospitals from 33 countries

International Network of Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services (HPH) was founded on the settings approach to health promotion in response to the WHO action area "Realigning Health Services" in the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion. WHO stimulated a movement by initiating an international network of national and subnational networks that supported the implementation of this approach. As of 2021, the HPH network consists of more than 600 hospitals and health services from 33 countries.

The network's international Secretariat is managed by OptiMedis. Oliver Gröne, PhD emphasizes, "The new standards for health-promoting hospitals and health services facilities represent an important update of the existing standards. They reflect several new areas of policy, practice, and evidence to support a broader implementation of the HPH vision. Specifically, they reflect the Global HPH Strategy 2021-2025 and the opportunities and challenges addressed by initiatives such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Shanghai Declaration on Health Promotion in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Astana Declaration." The new standards are available to download from the HPH website [here!](#)

Large OECD study on the care of chronically ill patients – OptiMedis is part of the international PaRIS-consortium



New questionnaire for chronically ill patients determines how their psyche, physical and emotional health is doing. Photo: istock / Halfpoint

How do chronically ill people experience their medical care? How are their needs dealt with, especially in the outpatient area? How do they rate waiting times, the transfer of information between doctors, their quality of life, or their psychological well-being, for example? The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is investigating these questions with a large-scale study, comparable to the PISA study in the education sector.

As part of the so-called "PaRIS Study – International Survey on Outcomes and Experiences of People Living with Chronic Conditions", experts

from several countries are working together on the development, standardisation, and implementation of a new generation of indicators that measure the results and experiences of chronically ill patients from outpatient health care. For the first time, they are being systematically recorded across borders. The focus of the survey is on Patient-Reported Experience Measures (PREMs) and Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs). The PREMs relate to how patients experience health care in terms of accessibility, coordination of care, and communication, the PROMs to quality of life, physical functioning, and the psychological well-being of those affected.

Care should become more patient-centred

The study runs in three phases: Two questionnaires will be developed from the beginning of 2020 to the end of the year, one for affected patients and one for general practitioners. OptiMedis was in charge of the creation of the physician questionnaire, which mainly records structural characteristics of the practices or clinics and,

together with the partners, creates the patient questionnaire, which contains PREM and PROM scales and also evaluates health literacy, health behaviour, and socio-demographic characteristics. First, relevant questionnaires were identified and analysed with regard to their suitability for the study according to several criteria. The questionnaires are to be finalised with the help of a Delphi survey in September and October. From mid-2020 to mid-2021, the questionnaires will then be tested in the participating countries and adjusted if necessary, after which the main surveys will take place in the participating countries and the results will be analysed and published. In these two phases, OptiMedis and its consortium partners will support data collection in more than 15 OECD member countries.

The results of the survey will show how the quality of care varies between and within countries. Through benchmarking, the countries can learn from other approaches - with the aim of optimising outpatient GP care and making it more patient-centred.

The consortium leader of the PaRIS study is the Dutch Institute for Health Systems Research (NIVEL). In addition to OptiMedis, the consortium also consists of the following partners: Ipsos MORI, London, United Kingdom; University of Exeter, Exeter, United Kingdom and Avedis Donabedian Institute, Barcelona, Spain.

At a glance

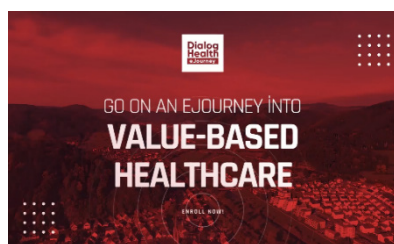
OptiMedis is one of the top employers in the German medium-sized business sector

OptiMedis has received an award as a Top Employer for mid-sized companies in 2021, presented by FOCUS- Business magazine and kununu, a portal for rating employers. "In the ranking of the best 100 employers, we are in 68th place. We are very pleased to receive this recognition from our employees," emphasizes Oliver Gröne, PhD, Vice Chair of the Board at OptiMedis. "We are currently working hard to expand our digital offerings even further, which is particularly important in the current home office era."



A total of 950,000 companies with more than four million ratings were evaluated. The basis was the size of the company, the number of ratings, the rating itself and the recommendation rate.

eJourney: OptiMedis AG's successful integrated care networks in Germany



Play the tape! Dialog Health's eJourney, "OptiMedis AG's successful integrated care networks in Germany," provides comprehensive insight into the work of our regional management companies Gesundes Kinzigtal and Gesunder Werra-Meißner-Kreis. Viewers can also see what we are doing in France. The video and accompanying workbook are available for purchase in several languages on the Dialog Health website.

[Click here for the German version.](#)

Helping decision makers making informed judgements: COMPAR-EU decision-making tools

What is actually the COMPAR-EU platform and what does it include? Pablo Alonso explains the different decision aids that are developed for different stakeholders and scenarios in his latest blog post on the COMPAR-EU self-management blog.

Learn more about it: <https://bit.ly/3pypCVs>

Media Reports

From rural Germany, Integrated Care grows into a global Model: "Health Affairs" article focuses on OptiMedis model

Under the title "From rural Germany, Integrated Care grows into a global model", the renowned US journal "Health Affairs " reports on the german regional care systems Healthy Kinzigtal and Healthy Werra-Meißner District.

To read the article online, [please click here!](#)

[Click here to see our Media Reports in German.](#)

Publications

Kringos D., Carinci F., Barbazza E., Bos V., Gilmore K., Groene O., Gulácsi L., Ivankovic D., Jansen T., Johnsen S. P., de Lusignan S., Mainz J., Nuti S., Klazinga N. (2020). HealthPros Network. Managing COVID-19 within and across health systems: why we need performance intelligence to coordinate a global response. Health Res Policy Syst. 2020 Jul 14;18(1):80. [Link](#)

[Click here to see our Publications in German.](#)

Events where you can meet us

NACIC2021 - 1st North American Conference on Integrated Care, Toronto, Canada

[Link](#)

[Click here to see our Events in Germany.](#)

Editorial responsibility

Britta Horwege & Indra Rojahn, Corporate Communications OptiMedis AG

Tel.: +49 40 22621149-52, E-Mail: kommunikation@optimedis.de