
SPAN ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

Strengthening Prevention Science in Europe

The second year of the SPAN project has seen some excellent advancement of our work packages and also seen the development of some exciting new outcomes and future opportunities.

SPAN PROJECT PROGRESS AND INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

In 2014 the WP1 (Project Management) team submitted to the European Commission a progress report outlining the SPAN achievements against intended deliverables, outcomes and financial status. On the whole, the feedback received from the European Commission in its assessment was favourable to the project, with an overall rating of 80%.

CATEGORY	SCORE/10
Objectives, results and products	8
Coherence between the work plan and activities carried out	7
Partnership	7
Management	9
Financial Management	8
Evaluation and/or quality assurance	7
Dissemination	8

- * 7-8 “Good”: Addresses the criterion with some aspects of high quality
- * 9-10 “very good”: Addresses the criterion with all aspects of high quality

In an effort to be responsive to the assessment and suggestions from the EC, the WP1 team also recruited an independent evaluator to assess the project. This evaluation examined the project and its operations and also took in to account the completed review and feedback provided by the EC. In general the independent review produced positive feedback and most importantly, provided the management team with measures that the project should take in the future:

1. Tactical responses: correcting the shortcomings noted in the assessment report
2. Strategic initiatives: implementing measures to maximise future success

We are pleased to report that the feedback and suggestions from both the EC evaluation and the independent evaluation are being implemented.

MAPPING EUROPEAN PREVENTION SCIENCE

Work Packages 3, 4 and 5 (Higher Education, Research and Workplace) developed a comprehensive combined questionnaire survey to map existing prevention science throughout Europe. Comprehensive databases in each country were assembled, allowing us to draw from a wide pool for our sampling strategy.

Survey data was collected and analysed by the Work Package partners, with results presented to the SPAN consortium at the Annual SPAN conference/meeting, this year held in Palma de Mallorca.



Members of the SPAN consortium at our 2014 Annual General Meeting, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

WP 3 (mapping education) presented results from the SPAN mapping survey; provided a definition of what a course / module in prevention science has been classified as for the

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purposes of our survey; noted that according to the perception of the respondent – public health was the main area that people were studying in and where they were expected to end up working. This mapping exercise also elicited a list of organisation that respondents stated they were members of.

One of the key conclusions was that the quality framework for education and international mobility could be improved by a clearer and more complete database of courses, modules and programs.

WP 4 (mapping workforce needs) presented the results from this element of the survey to date. Top respondent countries were Croatia, Italy, Spain, Finland and Poland; there is a need to invest in prevention science education and training in relation to advocacy, funding and management skills; most organisations reported having linked with Higher Education Institutions

Key Findings were identified as:

- About 80 % and more respondents think all mentioned fields of prevention knowledge/skills are moderately and very important for prevention workers in their organisations.
- Preparedness for prevention in participants' organisations: There is a need to invest in education/training, mostly in the field of advocacy for prevention, funding and management skills, then in knowledge/skills related to problem development, problem analysis and needs/resources assessment, program implementation quality and program evaluation.
- Most of the respondents (97.0 %) report that their institutions have links with higher education institutions, such as universities, academies and colleges.
- Respondents perceive that there is a need to improve knowledge/skills of prevention workers in all areas of prevention science (the "biggest" gap between gained and needed knowledge/skills of prevention is in the area of
- Funding, Advocacy for prevention and Development of prevention program logic model.
- Value given to prevention science and prevention work in respondent organisations is perceived as high or very high in 66.1 %, to prevention workforce education and training in 57.4 % and to stability of prevention work and funding in 62.0 %.

WP 5 (mapping research) presented a detailed summary of the results from the SPAN survey. It was clear from analysis that there is a need for policy research. The top 5 perceived needs for research quality improvement were intervention development, evaluation and implementation; policy research; and quantitative and qualitative methods in research. The top 4 areas of research were identified as:

- Behaviour problems (20%)
- Public health (19%)

- Alcohol / drug abuse (18%)
- Mental Health (15%)

BUILDING NETWORKS, SUPPORTING YOUNG RESEARCHERS

WP 7 (Physical networking) worked in conjunction with EUSPR to embed the SPAN project within the EUSPR 2013 and 2014 Annual conferences. These conferences had dedicated sessions for PhD students and Early Career Researchers to present their work, ensuring that the SPAN objective to engage young researchers / prevention professionals is achieved. In addition, SPAN offered “pre-conference” workshops dedicated to prevention science topics, with these workshops proving extremely popular and being sold out in both years.

Another part of the SPAN initiative to link young researchers with industry professionals, SPAN has awarded young researchers from across Europe travel and subsistence bursaries to assist with attending the SPAN workshops. Young researchers/prevention scientists to benefit from this SPAN initiative have come from the following countries:

- Austria
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Germany
- Hungary
- Italy
- Latvia
- Portugal
- Romania
- Sweden
- United Kingdom



SPAN Project coordinator Professor David Foxcroft with 2014 Bursary winners

DISSEMINATION AND WEBSITE

WP9 (Web development) completed the SPAN website, providing an excellent platform for information, including partner listings, work package outlines and goals for the future. Importantly, the website also acts as a medium within which to ensure dissemination of our project and its related products. The website is public and can be viewed here: <http://www.span-europe.eu/>

In presenting to the SPAN consortium in Palma, WP8 lead Harrie noted that 5000 hits had occurred on the SPAN website. Directions for the future of the website include addition of the databases from the mapping exercise, and for “fact sheets” to be developed that capture/summarise the research results from the project / surveys.

WP2 (Dissemination) produced and disseminated our first press releases and two E-newsletters, developed a Twitter and LinkedIn account and worked in collaboration with WP8 to place SPAN products on the Website. In addition to creating a strong cyber-space presence, we have developed visual products such as a banner/stand to be presented at

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conferences as well as postcards designed to be handed out in conference packs and disseminated among gatherings of prevention professionals.

SPAN FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The final year of the SPAN project will build upon the information/data that has been gathered in the first half of the project to inform the continued development of the quality plan and the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) packages.

At the 2014 meeting **WP6** lead Roman Gabrhelik presented the draft quality plan for feedback among the consortium. The aim of this quality plan is to set out the tasks required to improve the integration of prevention science degree/quality assurance standards, methods and approaches in the field of higher education across Europe. It will seek to make recommendations about what individual institutions need to do to implement a consistent quality framework underpinned by the ECTS.

Main questions for consortium to reflect / answer upon involve the final stages and how it should look: single course v set of course; what level undergraduate / post grad masters / PhD.

WP9 (ECTS packages) aim is to support partners and prevention science tertiary education providers to review the outcomes of the quality plan, review their own curriculum design, review their learning outcomes, calculate their credit allocation, estimate workloads, and review course documentation.

At the 2014 meeting WP9 lead Janet Mifsud and Anne-Marie Spiteri outlined a new approach to this work package, with the focus to be on developing the packages in depth in five pilot countries (UK; IT; MT; SE; DE; LT; CR). This allows for a more detailed and accurate ECTS package. Croatia have been testing the package that was developed based on existing Malta forms. Findings so far include a need for a glossary of terms.

CONCLUSION

This second annual report from the three-year SPAN project shows we have made great progress, even exceeding our own initial plans. The additional activity we have introduced to support early career prevention scientists is a very popular development within the network, and it is very pleasing to see that the EC have welcomed and supported this enhancement to the project. We are now on the home stretch: the final year of the project. A key focus over this next year will be to secure the legacy of SPAN and, to that end, we will be working closely with the European Society for Prevention Research (EUSPR) to embed SPAN within EUSPR, ensuring and sustaining the future of the network.