

Exploring the feasibility of a training program in frailty for primary healthcare providers in Greece: a study protocol

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Introduction: Geriatric education background varies across Europe. Educational programs on geriatric topics in primary health care (PHC) settings could be highly influential especially in countries with sparse opportunities for geriatric-oriented professional training.

Aim: To plan, implement and assess the feasibility and efficacy of an educational program aiming at training PHC professionals in the identification, assessment and management of frailty in PHC in Greece.

Methods: The present study, organized and supervised by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki PHC Research Network (AUTH.PHC.RN), will recruit PHC professionals (physicians, nurses and health visitors) on a volunteer basis. A mixed-methods approach using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods will be followed. The exploration, by focus groups of PHC professionals, of current attitudes towards frailty and unmet training needs will precede a training program, adapted to community geriatric care and consisted of an introduction to the frailty syndrome, theoretical and practical training in selected screening tools, comprehensive assessment and management of frailty.

Results: Assessment of feasibility will be based on written feedback from participants on challenges in application of acquired knowledge and ultimately by reported estimated impact on clinical practices. Efficacy will be assessed by exploring frailty awareness and actual clinical practices with evaluation questionnaires administered before, upon completion and 3 months after the training program.

Conclusions: This study aspires to raise awareness of the frailty syndrome amongst PHC professionals and add valuable, and hopefully exploitable, knowledge about the feasibility and efficacy of educational programs on frailty detection and management in PHC settings.