MedTech Europe's contribution to the 'Healthier Together – EU Non-Communicable Diseases Initiative'

The MedTech Europe Cardiovascular Sector Group welcomes the EU NCD Initiative to help Member States address the burden posed by NCDs such as CVDs, amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) remain the leading cause of death in the EU, leading to significant economic and societal impacts – further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.[1] CVD cost EU health care systems nearly €111 billion in 2015.[2] Moreover, productivity losses due to morbidity and mortality cost the EU €54 billion in 2015[2], and the total cost of providing informal care for people with CVD was nearly €45 billion that same year.[2]

Recent evidence suggests that recovered patients, including those that were not hospitalised for acute COVID-19, suffer increased risk of CVD after being infected with SARS-Cov-2. Patients had increased risk of cardiovascular problems, including abnormal heart rhythms, heart muscle inflammation, blood clots, strokes, myocardial infarction, and heart failure.[3]

Thus, MedTech Europe has identified **three priorities for EU-supported action under the cardiovascular diseases** strand, namely:

1. An EU Policy Plan to improve cardiovascular health

The EU NCD Initiative should include an **ambitious plan to address the burden of CVD,** to mobilize research and innovation in CVD, and promote public private partnerships in CVD innovation by leveraging the various policy and funding instruments, including Horizon Europe, the EU4Health Programme, the European Health Data Space and NextGenerationEU, as well as through horizontal healthcare and life sciences related policy instruments.

2. EU Policy Action on Secondary Prevention through early detection of CVDs

The next step to tackle CVD is **through an EU Joint Action for Member States on secondary prevention**, to encourage more focus on early detection programmes at national and regional levels, including comprehensive and regular heart and vascular health checks, better understanding of risk factors and predisposition. MedTech Europe recommends setting **EU Targets on early detection of specific CVD** and investing in comprehensive multidisciplinary early detection programmes, as well as training for reskilling healthcare professionals, especially within primary care and amongst specialist nurses.

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[1] EACH, Proposal for a Member States' Joint Action in secondary prevention, 2021.
[2] European Heart Network, European Cardiovascular Disease Statistics, 2017.
[3] Abbasi J, The COVID Heart – One Year After SARS-Cov-2 Infection, Patients Have an Array of Increased Cardiovascular Risks, JAMA, 2022.

3. Facilitation of data gathering and exchange

Identifying more patients through secondary prevention will make more reliable data on CVD available. To be able to 'manage' this data and information, a **European-wide representative and timely information system** should be set-up. There is a need for CVD registries to be coordinated and expanded at European level to **inform evidence-based decision-making** throughout the disease pathway – in linkage with the European Health Data Space.

Constructive, collaborative partnerships with patients, governments, and payers are needed to go even further to address Europe's CVD burden once and for all. MedTech Europe stands ready to collaborate with EU Institutions and national governments to take the necessary steps to improve cardiovascular health and help alleviate the CVD burden for Europe's citizens and for a more healthy and productive society.

About MedTech Europe

MedTech Europe is the European trade association for the medical technology industry including diagnostics, medical devices and digital health. Our members are national, European, and multinational companies as well as a network of national medical technology associations who research, develop, manufacture, distribute and supply health-related technologies, services and solutions.

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