

For immediate release 18 January 2024, Brussels

## MELIORA

### **New EU-funded Project launched to transform breast cancer risk reduction through Multimodal Engagement and sustainable Lifestyle Interventions optimised by Artificial Intelligence.**

The MELIORA Project, a new initiative within the [Cancer Mission](#) cluster of projects on “Prevention & early detection” dedicated to revolutionising breast cancer prevention and care, officially launches with a mission to address the pressing global challenges posed by Female Breast Cancer (BC). In 2020 alone, BC emerged as the most frequently diagnosed cancer in women worldwide, comprising 11.7% of all cancer cases<sup>1</sup>.

#### **WHY BREAST CANCER?**

- **Leading cause of global cancer incidence**
- **By 2040, the number of newly diagnosed breast cancers is projected to grow by over 40%**
- **Huge social and financial impact**
- **Highest treatment cost of any cancer**
- **Linked to modifiable risk factors**
- **Numerous barriers preventing the uptake of sustainable behavioural changes**

Beyond mortality and morbidity, BC's societal and financial ramifications are profound, affecting not only health services but also the careers of working women, with younger demographics facing significant career disruptions.

While BC carries the highest treatment costs among all cancers, a remarkable 30% of cases are preventable through modifiable risk factors<sup>2</sup>.

The challenge lies in encouraging adherence to healthier lifestyles, which, despite established nutrition guidelines, faces considerable barriers such as awareness, skills, and socio-demographic factors.

#### **Addressing Inequalities:**

Compounding these challenges are unacceptable inequalities in cancer care, particularly affecting women in rural areas, those with low education and income levels, and those facing societal stigmas. The disparities manifest across various BC metrics, including incidence, diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes.

The MELIORA Project recognises the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to bridge these gaps. Through pioneering approaches, including mobile health (mHealth), we aim to modify dietary behaviours and increase physical activity. Despite promising advancements in digital health technologies, the MELIORA Project acknowledges the necessity for high-quality lifestyle interventions to demonstrate the effectiveness of digital therapies in BC care.

MELIORA is aligned with [Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#) to combat cancer by actively involving patients and their families in intervention studies and by promoting a network of support and collaborative efforts to strengthen overall well-being.

MELIORA will develop specifically tailored studies spanning six piloting centres, encompassing both urban and rural areas and engaging 2080 participants in four European countries: Greece, Lithuania, Spain and

Sweden. This analysis is designed to offer a thorough assessment of the progress and impact of MELIORA on the community.

The target intervention will consist of a pool of information material, personalised guidance and feedback, delivered by health professionals as well as via digital tools, including mobile and web apps implementing the MELIORA intelligent **Virtual Coach** offering context-sensitive and personalised advice towards achieving and maintaining behavioural change.

The MELIORA project gathers a Consortium of 16 partners from across Europe, all working collaboratively towards its objectives:

- [CHAROKOPEIO UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS](#)
- [KAROLINSKA INSTITUTET](#)
- [FUNDACION PARA LA INVESTIGACION DEL HOSPITAL CLINICO DE LA COMUNITAT VALENCIANA, FUNDACION INCLIVA](#)
- [LIETUVOS SVEIKATOS MOKSLU UNIVERSITETAS](#)
- [BROSTCANCERFORENINGEN AMAZONA I STOCKHOLMS LA](#)
- [PAGALBOS ONKOLOGINIAMS LIGONIAMS ASOCIACIJA](#)
- [FUNDACION PARA EL FOMENTO DE LA INVESTIGACION SANITARIA Y BIOMEDICA DE LA COMUNITAT VALENCIANA](#)
- [UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES](#)
- [EUROPEAN FOOD INFORMATION COUNCIL](#)
- [PREDICTBY RESEARCH AND CONSULTING S.L.](#)
- [CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY HELLAS CERTH](#)
- [EXUS SOFTWARE MONOPROSOPI ETAIRIA PERIORISMENIS](#)
- [RISA SICHERHEITSANALYSEN GMBH](#)
- [BIOASSIST SA](#)
- [EUROPEAN HEALTH MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION](#)
- [FUNDACION ETICAS DATA SOCIETY](#)

The MELIORA consortium will continue its duties over the following 48 months. Keep updated on MELIORA's latest activities by following the project's social media channels, [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

For more information, please contact Ms Olga Polyaeva, Communications Manager (Projects) at the European Health Management Association – EHMA at [olga.polyaeva@ehma.org](mailto:olga.polyaeva@ehma.org).

- 
1. Sung H. et al. Global Cancer Statistics 2020: GLOBOCAN Estimates of Incidence and Mortality Worldwide for 36 Cancers in 185 Countries. *CA Cancer J Clin.* 2021 May;71(3):209-249. doi: 10.3322/caac.21660
  2. Islami F et al. Proportion and number of cancer cases and deaths attributable to potentially modifiable risk factors in the United States. *CA Cancer J Clin.* 2018 Jan;68(1):31-54. doi: 10.3322/caac.21440.