

Future of Heart Health in Europe: **A Holistic Care Think Tank**



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“Collaborating with a diverse array of stakeholders is paramount in adopting a truly holistic approach to heart health in Europe. By harnessing the unique perspectives and expertise of individuals across disciplines, sectors, and backgrounds, we can forge innovative solutions that address the challenges facing cardiovascular health today. Together, we can drive meaningful change and pave the way towards a healthier future for all.”

Berk Kiran, Vice President
Commercial Operations Europe



Foreword

At Daiichi Sankyo Europe (DSE), we recognise that improving cardiovascular (CV) health requires cross-disciplinary collaboration, innovative thinking and a unified vision. By fostering such collaboration and embracing a holistic mindset, care teams can drive tangible change in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of CV disease (CVD).

In January 2024, DSE convened a first-of-its-kind holistic heart health Think Tank, bringing together influential representatives from various healthcare disciplines across Europe who share our commitment to redefining heart health and care.

The **Future of Heart Health in Europe: A Holistic Care Think Tank** served as a platform for insightful dialogue. Clinicians, patient advocates, researchers, digital and media experts and policy specialists came together to discuss how a focus on holistic CV care in Europe can be realised.

Each participant contributed a unique perspective, based on their own knowledge and experiences, as they discussed topics including:

- The current landscape of CV health
- Future CV health possibilities
- Challenges and barriers to the progress of holistic care

Following a fruitful day of discussion, the Think Tank proposed **recommendations in three key areas** for meaningful action towards a holistic approach to CV care in Europe.

DSE would like to thank all the experts – who we call ‘halo health-related professionals’ – who participated in the Think Tank.



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Please note: DSE fully supports the exchange of knowledge and expertise and any progress towards improving CV care. The opinions presented in this report belong to the participants of the Think Tank and may not necessarily reflect those of DSE.

We care for every heartbeat

Executive Summary

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death in Europe, with more than 10,000 lives lost every day.^{1,2}

There is a growing emphasis on preventing and managing CVD through behavioural changes and risk factor management, including:

-  **Adopting a healthy diet**
-  **Smoking cessation**
-  **Blood pressure control**
-  **Increasing physical activity**
-  **Reduction of cholesterol**

Prevention and management of CVD requires a holistic approach with a multidisciplinary team of experts, who are engaged with and around patients. This approach should include input from halo health-related professionals – experts with a broad range of specialities including a focus on behavioural and physiological risk factors, such as diet, exercise and mental health. These experts play a vital role in raising awareness of the various aspects of CVD and, together, can build a complete picture of a person's health that goes beyond the view of the heart alone.

In January 2024, Daiichi Sankyo Europe (DSE) brought together halo health-related professionals for a first-of-its-kind holistic heart health Think Tank. The Think Tank discussed the significant barriers to holistic cardiovascular (CV) care including misinformation, limited communication, funding constraints and societal pressures.



To tackle these barriers and drive meaningful action towards a holistic approach to CV care in Europe, the Think Tank proposed recommendations in three key areas:

01

Improve lifelong support and education

Health education in schools can equip children with the knowledge needed to make informed decisions about their heart health from an early age. This lays a strong foundation for lifelong wellness. Workplace wellness programmes can incentivise healthy behaviours in later life.

02

Increase interdisciplinary collaboration and communication

There is a pressing need for improved communication between healthcare professionals (including clinicians and halo health-related professionals such as dietitians and psychologists). Furthermore, patients need to feel empowered to take control of their health. Improving communication between patients and healthcare professionals, together with more accessible patient information, will support patient empowerment and better coordination of care.

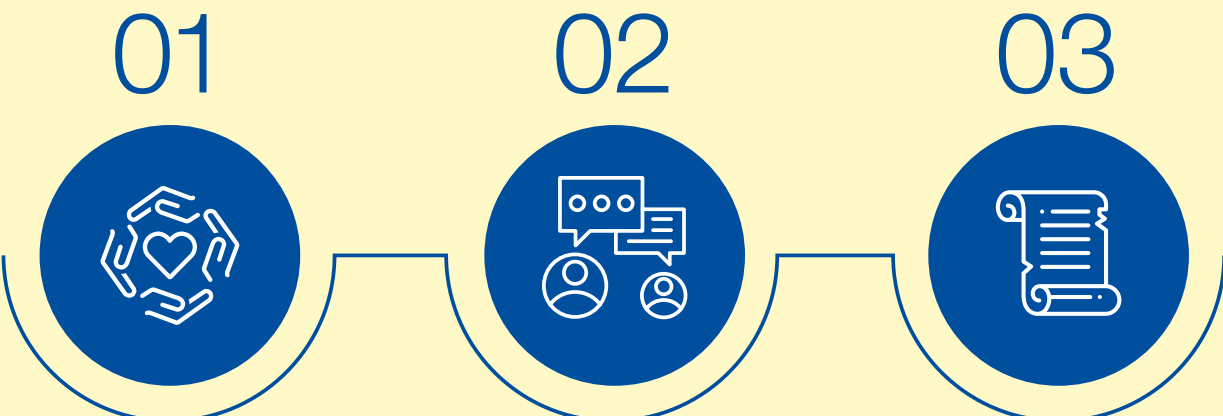
03

Changes in health policies across Europe

For change to occur at a national level, advocacy and a representative voice in Europe are needed to ensure a holistic view of CV care is included on political agendas. Policy changes will lead to better access to preventive care, support for adoption of a healthy lifestyle, and removal of barriers to equitable healthcare.

Implementation of these recommendations will help to transform the holistic care of people living with CVD, leading to better heart health across Europe.

Initiatives to transform holistic cardiovascular care



01
Improve lifelong support and education

- Leverage social media/press platforms to amplify healthcare literacy efforts
- Use messages that resonate
- Encourage early education of healthy living
- Target the workplace

02
Increase interdisciplinary collaboration and communication

- Assign a patient case manager
- Embrace implementation of artificial intelligence (AI)

03
Changes in health policies across Europe

- Raise awareness of CV health issues among politicians
- Partner with a Member of European Parliament
- Partner with European Alliance for Cardiovascular Health (EACH) to highlight importance of holistic heart health



Introduction

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a collective term designating various disorders of the heart and blood vessels. CVD is the leading cause of death in Europe, responsible for more than 10,000 lives lost every day.^{1,2} In 2020, in excess of 60 million people were living with CVD in the European Union (EU), with nearly 13 million new cases diagnosed that year.³

Most lives lost from CVD are individuals aged 50 and above.⁴ With the ageing population increasing across Europe, the underlying risk factors and causes of CVD must be tackled swiftly and effectively to prevent a dramatic increase of new CVD cases.^{5,6}

Beyond the impact CVD has on individuals, CVD poses a significant economic burden. Studies estimate €282 billion is spent annually on CVD in Europe, making it a substantial expense for healthcare systems and societies.^{7,8} This cost includes direct medical costs (such as hospitalisations and surgeries) and indirect costs such as lost productivity due to sick leave.⁸

However, CVD – a collective term designating various disorders of the heart and blood vessels – is largely preventable, and 80% of premature heart disease and stroke cases could be prevented.⁹ To improve the prevention and care of CVD, it is essential to address its causes with behavioural changes and risk factor management. Holistic interventions include lifestyle modifications such as a healthy diet, adequate levels of physical activity, mental wellness/stress management and smoking cessation – all of which can make a significant positive impact on a person’s cardiovascular (CV) health.^{10,11}

Following its inaugural meeting in January 2024, the **Future of Heart Health in Europe: A Holistic Care Think Tank** proposed key recommendations to improve holistic heart health. This report presents the discussions and recommendations of the Think Tank, with the aim of enacting change towards improving holistic CV healthcare.



€282bn 
is spent annually on CVD alone in Europe^{7,8}

Improve lifelong support and education



Building healthy foundations: Education and literacy for lifelong wellness

Studies indicate that the first 1,000 days of life shape a child's development¹⁴, and early exposure to healthy behaviours can increase the likelihood of maintaining a healthy lifestyle later in life. Educating children at an early age therefore lays the foundation for healthy living through proper nutrition and physical activity.

Universities can also contribute to promoting holistic heart health by incorporating relevant topics into their medical courses. This means going beyond traditional medical training to include disciplines such as psychology, nutrition and exercise science.

By integrating information about risk factors such as mental health, lifestyle, and their impact on CV risk, students gain a comprehensive understanding of the broader determinants of heart health.

A 2023 report found that 65% of avoidable deaths from CVD occur among the working-age population.¹⁵ Workplace associated risk factors, such as convenience eating and sedentary behaviour, makes this a focus area for improved awareness and education.

A mindset shift

There is increasing recognition of the need to shift perspective on health outcomes, from focusing only on extending lifespan to prioritising quality of life. This underscores the importance of ensuring that individuals not only survive but thrive in their daily lives. To support this mindset shift, adopting a healthy lifestyle should be seen not just as a necessity but as an aspirational goal, particularly among the younger generation.

Creating a supportive environment that encourages positive attitudes toward healthy behaviours can help establish lifelong habits that enhance physical, mental, and emotional health. This approach benefits individuals and contributes to building healthier communities, ultimately enhancing societal well-being.



Key barriers

- Misinformation**
Inaccurate information about CVD, for example from social media, can lead to misconceptions about the disease and its risk factors, and prevent informed decision-making.
- Health inequity**
Disparities in access to healthcare and health education contribute to variations in health literacy levels and understanding of CVD among different demographic groups.
- Limited patient empowerment**
Some individuals may not feel empowered to take control of their own health. Patients may rely solely on HCPs for key information and may not seek information about CVD prevention and management.
- Lack of scientific understanding and knowledge**
Not fully understanding the science behind heart health could cause individuals to undervalue preventive measures. They may overlook the importance of lifestyle changes in keeping their heart healthy and how to make these changes effectively.

Strategic recommendations

- Leverage social media and press platforms to amplify healthcare literacy efforts**
Partner with trusted, credible celebrities and corporations to cultivate a holistic health-focused community, thereby increasing awareness and engagement.
- Use messages that resonate**
Implement practical, positive and straightforward messaging in patient materials to improve understanding and empowerment. Inclusive messaging should be used to ensure that content resonates with all communities. Develop plain language summaries to supplement scientific papers.
- Encourage early education of healthy living**
Introduce mandatory education on healthy living from a young age. Health education curricula should be redesigned to incorporate practical lessons on nutrition, exercise and overall wellbeing. In this way, future generations can be equipped with the tools and knowledge needed to develop habits that promote lifelong heart health.
- Target the workplace**
Integrate educational programmes and initiatives into workplace settings, to reach and inform a broad audience about CV health. Workplace wellness programmes can incentivise physical activity, offer healthy food options, and provide resources for stress management and mental well-being.



“My dream in CV health is to promote education, particularly in children. With simple interventions of promoting a healthy lifestyle, avoiding tobacco, improving physical exercise, reducing obesity and also controlling simple risk factors (hypertension, cholesterol, diabetes), you can avoid more than 80% of premature cardiovascular deaths.”

Professor Jose Gonzalez Juanatey
Cardiologist and member of World Heart Federation, Spain

Increase interdisciplinary collaboration & communication



Purposeful collaboration

A collaborative approach to CV care involves patient perspective, with lifestyle and social factors that influence health considered in holistic care plans. Through shared decision-making and coordinated care plans, multidisciplinary teams including halo health-related professionals have the potential

to optimise patient outcomes and improve quality of care and patient satisfaction. Furthermore, this approach can lead to greater efficiency in healthcare delivery, by reducing duplication of services and improving utilisation of resources.

The impact of technology on communication

Healthcare systems rely on digital solutions for most day-to-day management of conditions.¹² Systems in Europe primarily use an electronic medical record, which allows access to comprehensive health data across all levels of care. Electronic prescriptions have become a cornerstone of care, enhancing the safety and quality of medication management for patients.¹³

While digital applications have improved communication channels between primary care and hospital services (e.g. via e-consultation), there is room for improvement. On a practical level, healthcare professionals (HCPs) may not have the digital skills needed for such telecare services. Training programmes such as the UK's NHS Digital Academy are addressing this competence gap.



Key barriers



Limited communication between HCPs and patients

Ineffective communication may hinder the exchange of crucial information between HCPs and patients about CVD risks, symptoms, and preventive measures.



Interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration are lacking

Limited communication and alignment between healthcare experts and specialists within their respective fields may lead to missed opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. This may result in multiple parallel treatment approaches for the patient, instead of a single holistic approach.

Strategic recommendations



Assign a patient case manager

A dedicated case manager or coordinator for each patient would facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, including communication between clinicians and halo health-related professionals such as dietitians, exercise scientists and psychologists.

Appointed at a healthcare trust level and tasked with overseeing the care delivered by the various health-related professionals involved, the case manager would be responsible for coordinating a comprehensive approach to a patient's care.

This would reduce the focus on specific conditions in isolation, instead promoting a complete picture of the patient's health and wellbeing. It is expected that the long-term benefit of improved patient outcomes would outweigh the additional resources required to support this role.



Embrace implementation of artificial intelligence (AI)

AI-powered predictive analytics can analyse vast amounts of patient data, from genetic predispositions to lifestyle factors. This can help spot heart issues early and offer personalised treatments.

AI-driven technology can also help streamline communication between HCPs across different disciplines and care levels. Closer collaboration can enable multidisciplinary teams to create more detailed plans for each patient's care. AI-driven technology could also help support effective communication between HCPs and the patient.



"It should be a top priority to look at heart health holistically and encourage an exchange between experts of different fields. If we look at the data, we see that there is a large number of factors that influence cardiovascular health. Many of these factors go beyond the traditional risk factors like blood pressure or cholesterol, and they include diet, exercise or also mental health. If we want to optimise patient care, it is a priority to have a more holistic view of cardiovascular health, especially in clinical settings."

Claudia Garbrecht
Psychologist, Germany

Changes in health policies across Europe



Health as a political priority

In the coming years, the role of health and healthcare delivery will become even more prominent in society. Governments and politicians shape policies that directly affect the health and well-being of people across Europe. These policies can help reduce disparities in health outcomes between demographic groups.

Furthermore, as populations continue to age and healthcare systems struggle to cope with increasing demands, there is a pressing need to prioritise a

holistic approach to healthcare on political agendas. Lifestyle changes and environmental factors (such as pollution, light, noise) further complicate the outlook for CV care. Sustained efforts are therefore needed to promote awareness of CV care (including diet, exercise and mental wellbeing), implement evidence-based interventions, and address systemic barriers to equitable healthcare access. This entails integrating holistic approaches into policy frameworks.

Key barriers

Limited government policies
Inadequate or misaligned government policies may impact public awareness and understanding of holistic CV health, and resources allocated for improving health literacy.

Health inequity
Disparities in access to healthcare and resources can lead to differential outcomes in heart health based on socio-economic factors. Those impacted by health inequities may experience higher rates of CV issues due to limited access to preventive care and education.

Strategic recommendations

Raise awareness of CV health issues among politicians
Raise a holistic approach to CV care with politicians to ensure prioritisation on political agendas. Partnerships with government will support work towards better holistic health policies. By highlighting the significance of CV health and related challenges, policymakers may be motivated to allocate resources and create policies that support holistic heart health initiatives.

Partner with a Member of European Parliament
Create a partnership with a Member of the European Parliament who can serve as an advocate for holistic heart health across Europe. This representative can champion initiatives aimed at improving CV health literacy and advocate for policies that address the multifaceted aspects of heart health.

Partner with European Alliance for Cardiovascular Health (EACH) to highlight importance of holistic heart health
Collaborate with stakeholders and experts from EACH to amplify advocacy efforts, facilitate collaboration and drive policy changes. Partnership with EACH can ensure the holistic care perspective is considered within initiatives that positively impact CV health outcomes across Europe.

Conclusion: Working towards holistic heart healthcare

While pockets of excellence may exist in some areas regarding holistic heart healthcare, there is still a substantial need to address the gap between the understanding and implementation of holistic approaches to CVD prevention and management.

The strategic recommendations proposed by the Think Tank reflect a proactive approach to transform holistic heart health today. Prevention and management of CVD requires a multidisciplinary team of experts and patients. The recommendations therefore emphasise the importance of collaboration across disciplines (including clinicians and halo health-related professionals such as dietitians, psychologists and exercise scientists) and prioritisation of the needs and well-being of patients.

Through partnerships between healthcare organisations, research institutions and advocacy groups, standardised protocols and educational resources can be developed that focus on the multifaceted aspects of CV health.

Furthermore, with the introduction of holistic health education in schools, CV health literacy can be developed and habits promoting lifelong heart health can be instilled from a young age.

Raising political awareness of the need for a holistic approach to CV care and advocating for changes in health policies can provide the essential framework and resources needed to improve patient outcomes.

Additionally, establishing a specialised advocacy organisation can further support the efforts to drive change towards holistic CV healthcare across Europe.



“I think it’s most important that we come together and that we include the right stakeholders. We need to include the decision-makers because we can have the science, but we need implementation.

Joost Wesseling
European Nutrition for Health Alliance

About Daiichi Sankyo Europe

At Daiichi Sankyo we care for every heartbeat. Our goal is to protect people from CV disease through our expertise in providing innovative medicines, and to help those who suffer from it.

As well as our commitment to providing medicines for a diverse range of patients, we support the clinical community and healthcare ecosystems across Europe to ensure that we are able to help those who are affected by cardiovascular disease today.

We believe that healthcare can only be improved by bringing together like-minded, caring groups and individuals, who share our passion and commitment for improving care. By working together and addressing the challenges of CVD from the perspectives of patients and those who stand with them, we are able to expand medical knowledge and support new approaches to care, built on the highest standards of science, research and innovation.

Visit wecareforeveryheartbeat.com
or scan the QR code here:



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