

Update on a Danish national pain plan.

Since 2018, we and other patient representatives from our patient organization FAKS have been involved in the work on a national Danish pain plan - "National strategy directed at people with chronic pain"¹

Recently, two of the main initiatives came to an end. The 27th of November on the occasion of the publication of

"Recommendations for cross-sectional to directories for people with chronic pain -measures and organization"² Various stakeholders were invited to participate in a workshop/theme day.

This work was actually the fusion of two separate initiatives of the initial national strategy for people with chronic pain: 1. National clinical recommendations for assessment and treatment of people with chronic pain and 2. Recommendations for organization and measures in the area of pain.



Within existing economical framework

The event organized by The National Health Authority was kicked off with a few words from the director of The National Health Authority. He spoke about the potential of the recommendations saving money by shortening patient trajectories of assessment and cutting down on futile and even harmful treatment and surgical interventions. He also emphasized that the recommendations should to be carried out within the existing economical framework of the Danish regions and municipalities. With the very limited resources allocated politically, this has been the terms for the national pain plan from the beginning.

Nevertheless, we noticed quite a bit of head shaking among the participants expressing the circumstances of the recommendations being wishful thinking rather than realistic. The recommendations points to a lot of assignments and responsibilities that possibly will be difficult to deliver on in practice. In addition, we were also disappointed with the complete absence of The National Social Authorities formally part of the working group.

¹ https://europeanpainfederation.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/National-danish-pain-plan_Lars-Bye-Moller_23.02.23_compressed.pdf

² <https://www.sst.dk/da/udgivelser/2023/Anbefalinger-for-tvaersektorielle-forloeb-for-mennesker-med-kroniske-smerter>

Patient voices have been heard

Aside from the difficulties to carry out the recommendations without added resources, we are mostly satisfied with the content of the document itself. During the working process of the recommendations, we were afraid that it would be watered down. There has been many considerations in order not to step outside the remit of The National Health Authorities and not to step on the toes of different groups of health professionals. However, we feel that the document reflects that our patient voices have been heard. Several of our perspectives and proposals have actually been directly incorporated into the document. Among other things the document points to the lack of knowledge and education of chronic pain. Also the terminology and nomenclature of ICD-11 has been incorporated.



PRO - Patient reported outcomes

At the present time, only one initiative is left to be carried out among the five initiatives of the national pain strategy. This is the development of a PRO - patient reported outcome assessment questionnaire to be used in both primary and secondary care. The work is already in progress as several workshops have been conducted by The National Health Data Authorities with patient representatives from FAKS, health professionals and researchers.

Patient reported outcomes - PRO can be used for several purposes such as research, ensuring quality of treatment, value based healthcare. However, first and foremost the aim is to create added clinical value for us patients and health professionals by focusing and qualifying the content of conversations and individualizing treatment.

Further work has to be done

Even though the recommendations are now published, we must not be complacent. A lot of work lies ahead in order to ensure that the various stakeholders will commit and at least make an effort to incorporate the recommendations in daily practice. Also, we may need to approach the health politicians in order to secure the necessary resources.

Best regards.

Lars Bye Møller & Sanne Lydø
Volunteers
Health science and International relations.

FAKS - The Danish Association of chronic Pain
Afflicted.

