

Report on Visit to Institute for Public Health and Addiction (ISFG)

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The visit to the Institute for Public Health and Addiction (ISGF - Institut für Sucht- und Gesundheitsforschung) was conducted aiming to finalize the smartphone-based intervention of the research project titled “*Guided smartphone-based treatment for patients in opioid maintenance treatment in Iran - transdiagnostic treatment for substance use and common mental disorders*”.

The mentioned project is being carried out through a collaboration between the Iranian National Center for Addiction Studies (INCAS), Vice-Chancellor of Research and Technology, Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS) and the ISGF, the World Health Organization Collaborative Center (WHO-CC) of the University of Zurich (UZH: Universität Zürich) and with the financial support of the Swiss National Science Foundation.

The aim of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a newly designed, culturally adapted, gender-sensitive, guided smartphone intervention based on integrated community reinforcement approach (CRA) and cognitive behavioral treatment (CBT) among patients receiving opioid agonist treatments (OATs) in Tehran, Iran.

The principal investigators of the project are Prof. Michael Schaub, Associate Professor in UZH and Scientific Director of ISGF, and Prof. Afarin Rahimi-Movaghar, Professor of Psychiatry and Director of INCAS. The project has received approval of the Institutional Research Ethics Committee of Vice-Chancellor of Research and Technology, TUMS (ethics committee reference number: IR.TUMS.MEDICINE.REC.1399.714) and has been registered in Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials (IRCT) (IRCT registration number: IRCT20170702034844N8).

With coordination with Department of Neuroscience, Addiction Studies and Neuroimaging of School of Advanced Technologies in Medicine (SATiM), TUMS, it was decided that this project is carried out as dissertation of Mr. Eisa Naghizadeh, PhD student of addiction studies.

Dates:

From November 21, 2022 to December 21, 2022

Participants:

- Alireza Noroozi, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Iranian National Center for Addiction Studies
- Eisa Naghizadeh, PhD Student, SATiM, TUMS

Activities

- Presence during working days in ISGF to complete following tasks for the project:
 - To complete some modules of the intervention
 - Translation of some modules of the intervention to Persian
 - To edit Persian version of the modules translated by the PhD student (EN)
 - Adaptation of the intervention with the context of providing addiction treatment services in Iran
 - Adaptation of the intervention with cultural considerations
 - To assist uploading the Persian version of some modules in the system
- To participate in project meetings
 - To discuss and finalize order of the modules
 - To discuss the necessity of using Persian calendar in the modules on planning and implementation of treatment tasks
 - To discuss details of the study protocol
- To receive training on how to design interactive, educational websites using Drupal system, version 9
- To participate in two meetings with presence of all members of project team on November 21, 2022 and December 14, 2022 for working on the intervention content and study protocol
- Request, coordination and conduct a meeting with Katja Durkin, Head of Global Affairs, UZH Global Office
 - Date: December 5, 2022
 - Venue: UZH Global Office, UZH
 - Attendees: Katja Durkin, Michael Schuab, Alireza Noroozi, Chantal Marquart, and Eisa Naghizadeh
 - Agenda: To discuss on areas for expansion of inter-universities cooperations
 - Report: At the meeting the TUMS's Global Strategies and International Affairs (GSIA) message regarding the willingness for expanding mutual cooperations was communicated and areas for collaborations were discussed. The GSIA's presents were delivered. After the meeting, an e-mail was sent to thank and establish communication between Ms. Katja Durkin and the Dr. Nasim

Chinifroush, the Head of the Iranian-Swiss Cooperation Chamber in GSIA, TUMS.

- To participate in a lecture on “Internet-based Interventions for Treatment of Substance Use Disorders (SUDs)” presented by Dr. Nikolaos Boumparis in ISGF on December 12, 2022
- To coordinate and visit Arud Addiction Medicine Center (Arud Zentrum für Suchtmedizin) a model opioid agonist treatment center in Zurich and talk with Dr. Thilo Beck, the psychiatrist and medical director of the center on December 20, 2022

In total, the completed mission contributed significantly to achieving tangible progress in completing and adapting the intervention modules, reviewing the implementation protocol, and also getting to know how to implement the intervention modules in the web-based intervention system.

In addition, it provided an opportunity to meet in person with people working the Global Affairs Office of the University of Zurich in order to develop cooperation and become familiar with Switzerland's programs in the treatment of opioid use disorder.