

TrainOrthot

A TRANSNATIONAL ON-LINE COURSE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE PARTICULAR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS IN THE FIELD OF FOOT PATHOLOGY THERAPY

Foot pathologies are recognized as a social problem of Europe's population as they affect a high percentage of people between 40 and 70 years of age. 35% of such problems are serious enough to require medical care (EUROSHOE Project GIRD-CT-200-00343).

The greater part of Europe's orthopaedic sector comprising 25 000 companies is constituted by small and medium-sized enterprises that must be thoughtful of their employees' skill improvement and competency development if they want to adapt to growing exactingness of the profession on the one hand and demands of new customers on the other. Nevertheless, orthopaedic technology is confronted with many barriers in the field of theoretical education and practical training which may lead to the decreased ability of orthotic professionals to get adapted to the current needs of society.

Educational programmes in the field of foot orthopaedics and the categorization of orthopaedic professionals and their competences and skills vary from one European country to another. The most remarkable differences occur between the North, South and East Europe regions. Moreover, a limited access to educational courses in mother tongue is a frequent impediment interfering with education of many professionals and students. Poor communication between clinical team members is another peculiarity of the sector referable to their varied knowledge and skills.

On the basis of the said information, a consortium composed of five partners elected to join forces and support the field of food pathology treatment. The Consortium pools the following partners:

- P0 **APTO** The Association of Workers from Orthotics
- P1 **UTB** The Tomáš Baťa University in Zlín
- P2 **IBV** Instituto de Biomechánica de Valencia

- P3 **ISPO** The International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics
- P4 **UoS** The University of Salford

The main objective of the project was to create and validate a transnational e-learning (distance) training programme tailor-made to meet educational needs of the foot orthopaedic sector in various European countries in such a manner that the results should be adopted and applied that had been obtained in the preceding research project named INNOFOOT (Innovative Foot Disorder Treatment). Within the framework of the INNOFOOT project, learning and training materials were gathered and, subsequently the general transnational syllabus was created. A part of the materials is based on the collection of books (Orthopedische Schoontehniek) published by the NVOS occupational association that agreed to the collection's utilization for the purpose of educational purposes within the framework of the TrainOrthot project.

The TrainOrthot project had been funded within the framework of lifelong learning programme by the European Union for two years.

In the TrainOrthot project, four educational programmes were developed and verified in practice as a tailor-made solution to accommodate the needs of the Slovak, Czech, Spanish and English specialists working in the field of orthotics – orthopaedic technicians. In addition, a programme was developed for orthopaedic technique students learning at vocational schools in order that they can refer to it at the conduct of further professional activities.

Following the introductory meeting and project launching, an important step was made in January 2013 when the second working meeting of the Consortium was held in Valencia, Spain. The Consortium convened to summarize and evaluate the results of

the first project year ending on 30.11.2012. During the said period of time, the project partners worked on the learner need definition and content specification of the learning course. The teaching and learning content based on the analysis of the needs of the countries participating in the project was developed in collaboration with other associations and institutions.

On the basis of the analysis, the following e-learning course content structure was defined:

- Module 1:** Introduction to the human body examination
- Module 2:** Foot pathologies
- Module 3:** Recording of the shape and size of the foot
- Module 4:** Design of orthopaedic devices for the foot
- Module 5:** Orthopaedic shoe lasts
- Module 6:** Introduction to orthopaedic shoe manufacture
- Module 7:** Adjustments to orthopaedic shoes and insoles

The Consortium partners perceived their second working meeting as a valuable opportunity to meet, interchange information, summarize the progress of the project, discuss the findings, clarify pending

issues and agree about and synchronize the subsequent steps. So, the further procedure included the translation of educational and training materials into the pertinent national languages, development of the on-line learning platform structure and implementation of the educational and training materials and content in the on-line learning platform.

The third Consortium meeting held in May 2013 confirmed it was necessary to focus on finalisation of the on-line learning platform. Subsequently, pilot testing and validation of the created courses was conducted in the Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Kingdom of Spain. The pilot course started at the end of September 2013, lasted six weeks and ended on November 15, 2013. The version for the public underwent final adjustments and was prepared for commercial use starting in January 2014.

The representatives of all partners participated in the last Consortium meeting held on November 07, 2013 in Bratislava. At the meeting, all project results were presented in consideration of the objectives that the Consortium had set and attained in a successful manner. The pilot course was conducted properly and the results of the course constitute the basis of the improved satisfaction of educational needs of the respective partner countries.

Should you be interested, do not hesitate to contact the Consortium members for more information about the project or on-line course participation. You can send an e-mail enquiry to your local partner stating "Project TrainOrthot" in the subject line of your message. The local partners can be contacted at the following e-mail addresses:

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