Newsletter – Boundless Trauma Care Central Europe (BTCCE)

**>>>Project<<<**

BTCCE has already been dwelling on the linkage of regional and national (primary) trauma care systems in the western border region of Germany and its neighboring countries the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France for the last two years. The project has been initiated to foster the mutual support and team play of dispatch centers, ambulance services, hospitals and rehabilitation services along European borders. On local, as well as regional level, various cross-border cooperation initiatives and agreements aiming at improving trauma patient treatment have been identified. However, the project’s results from the previous two years have led to the conclusion that these cooperation initiatives are not used to its full extent, nor are there functioning cooperation found within the entire project area of BTCCE. Underlying reasons are the regions’ diverse geographic and structural demands, as well as mechanisms such as the degree of personal commitment and the linguistic and technical practicability of projects, which differ among regions. The project originated in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, where personnel responsible for public security and health have been working side by side in the Eumed and Emric(+) working group for more than four decades now.

**>>>Timeline<<<**

The project work conducted so far was divided into the hospital level, followed by the prehospital level. In the former, ten trauma care experts from the border regions in the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and France signed a letter of intent, committing themselves to achieving the aims as laid down by the project. Subsequently, almost all project partners exemplified their particular regional situation and the extent of cooperation with their neighboring country in interviews. These interviews and their results were part of two partial studies and have been presented and acknowledged on a number of international congresses. The publication of these studies is currently in process and should be finalized soon.

After last year’s successful start of the project in the hospital level, various trauma care providers working in ambulance services and dispatch centers in the study region were contacted. A number of these agreed to participate in further interviews and some showed their engagement augmenting the letter of intent with their signatures. Experiences, existing collaborations, problem areas and ideas on future opportunities mentioned in the interviews are currently being summarized and subject to a second article which is planned for publication in the coming year. Consecutive objectives include a study on the level of rehabilitation cooperation and the expansion to additional border regions.

**>>>News<<<**

**Conferences:** After the 15th European Congress of Trauma and Emergency Surgery & 2nd World Trauma Congress in May and the German Congress for Orthopaedics and Trauma Surgery DKOU in October this year, the BTCCE project has also been presented at the European Public Health Conference in Glasgow this November.

**Stakeholders:** In addition to the numerous subscribers of the letter of intent, the Network Acute Care Limburg (NAZL) has offered to support the BTCCE project this year. Its representative supported the pre-hospital study phase immensely by familiarizing the BTCCE team with important Dutch stakeholders. Preliminary study results have recently been sent to the Dutch Health Ministry, which is planning on addressing the identified problems along the Dutch-German border. Furthermore, the European Society for Trauma and Emergency Surgery (ESTES) acknowledges the BTCCE vision and hence broadens the project’s network considerably.

**Europe:** Current objectives involve the geographic extension of the BTCCE study region. Contact has been established with potential project partners in Austria, as well as in the German city of Kiel and the bordering Denmark. There, similar ideas on cross-border cooperation exist and both border regions expressed their strong interest in the BTCCE project.

**Publications:** Two research articles are expected to be published within the coming months. Updates will be announced on the MUMC website as soon as the publication date and journal are fixed.

Beyond that, the NAZL website will keep you informed about news in the BTCCE project from now on.

*Maastricht, November 28th, 2014*