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THE HUNGARIAN ALLIANCE AGAINST DEPRESSION: STRENGTHENING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE INTERVENTION REGION

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The European Alliance Against Depression (EAAD) was formed in 2004 with funding from the European Commission to create community-based networks to employ an evidence-based approach to improving the care of depressed persons and preventing suicidality. The first intervention region of the Hungarian EAAD programme was Szolnok and its sub-region. Compared to the average of the previous 9 years in 2005, in the first year of the programme suicide rates decreased with 57%, in 2006 with 47% in Szolnok city. This means that the suicide rate was 30.1/100.000 in 2004, 13.1/100.000 in 2005 and 14.5/100.000 in 2006. The decrease was higher among men than among women. Most important elements of the programme: destigmatisation of depression and suicidal ideations, more help seeking, first of all among men, increasing number of calls at the hot-line services (50% male calls), increasing patient visits at the hospitals psychiatry department. Strengthening local networks based on local needs and facilities, strengthening the collaboration among the local helping professionals, that is a multi-focal and social capital building approach seems to be the most important aspect of the programme.