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*We want to hear
from you*

**We value the opinion of
our readers and we are
looking forward to
receive your feedback
about this newsletter.**

**Please send us a
personal email with your
suggestions or comments
to the following address:**

**Attn: Paraskevi Kinni
info-cy@life-medea.eu**

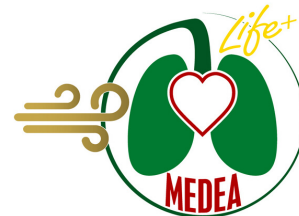


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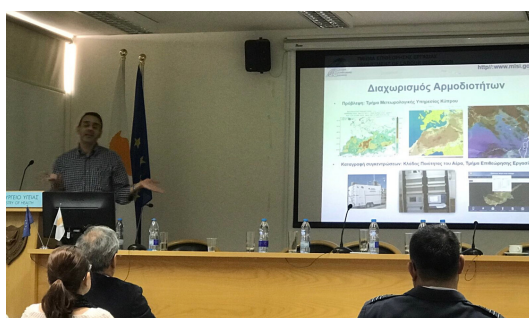
LIFE MEDEA NEWSLETTER



Medical and Public Health Services Scientific Workshop on Desert Dust Storms and associated Health Effects

In association with the LIFE MEDEA project, the Medical and Public Health Services (MPHS) of the Cyprus Ministry of Health, organised a scientific workshop on the Desert Dust Storms (DDS) and associated health effects in December 2019. The meeting provided information and training to health professionals from all around Cyprus about the the phenomenon and its public health implications. More specifically, the workshop covered the following key areas:

Description of epidemiological evidence about the health effects of DDS events; Characterisation of the variability of DDS events in Crete, Cyprus and Israel; Description of the available meteorological forecasting models for DDS events in Cyprus; Analysis of the perceptions and practices of local stakeholders and competent authorities in Eastern Mediterranean countries about DDS; and a description of the role and actions of the Department of Labor Inspection to protect public health from DDS events. Lastly, the progress of the LIFE MEDEA project, which aims to demonstrate the feasibility and effectiveness of an adaptation plan towards the mitigation of health effects arising from DDS was also presented. The MPHS of Cyprus Ministry of Health is a key member of the MEDEA Advisory Committee and the organisation of this event lies within the framework of transfer of MEDEA practices to competent authorities in Cyprus and the European Union.



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Message from the Project Coordinator

Welcome to the 4th edition of the LIFE MEDEA newsletter.

The current edition features the scientific workshop on DDS events that was organised by the Cyprus Ministry of Health. The workshop was attended by health professionals from all around Cyprus.

The newsletter also describes the beginning of the second AF panel study year with the recruitment and follow-up of patients and summarises the progress on recruitment of asthmatic children in Cyprus and Crete.

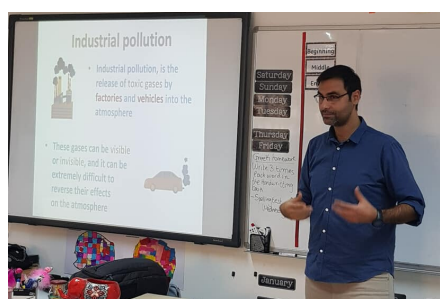
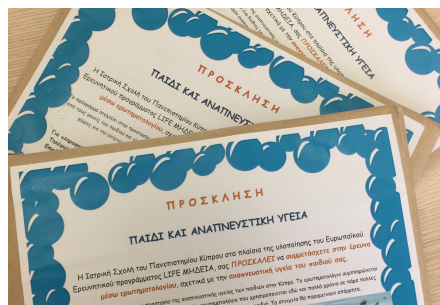
Regarding dissemination activities, the preliminary results of the Asthma panel study first year were presented at the European Respiratory Society's annual congress in Spain, as well as at the 5th annual Cyprus Public Health day in Cyprus and the Panhellenic Pediatric Allergy Congress in Greece. Finally, the newsletter provides an update regarding the upcoming documentary on DDS events by the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation and introduces the newest members of LIFE MEDEA. We hope that you will enjoy reading this edition.

*Professor
Panayiotis Yiallourous,
Coordinator of LIFE MEDEA*

Atrial Fibrillation panel: Study year 2

In Autumn 2019, the LIFE MEDEA project carried out recruitment and follow-up of new Atrial Fibrillation (AF) patients in Cyprus and Crete, as well as continued the follow-up of the cohort of AF patients that participated in the MEDEA study during the last spring. Eligible AF patients were identified with the help of electrophysiologists from the Nicosia General Hospital during their scheduled visits to the pacemaker clinic, and were asked to participate in the study. For this phase of the study, updated wearable smartwatch devices have been used, in order to allow for easier use by the elderly AF patients, that are not familiar with electronic devices, and more efficient data collection. In turn this change facilitated the recruitment and follow-up process for participants in all sites. Patients were randomly divided into the three groups of the study, with the first (control) group performing their normal activities during dust events. The second group was instructed to follow specific protective measures during dust events which primarily included restriction of movement to outdoor spaces. The third group was instructed to restrict movement to outdoor spaces and follow measures when inside their house. For the third group, air cleaners were also placed in all participants' houses. For a subset of participants, in all groups, particle samplers were placed in and out the house in order to calculate particle infiltration rates during DDS. Overall, during the autumn 2019 study period, there were several notable dust events which lasted for several days. This allowed the MEDEA researchers to collect a rich set of data using the particle samplers. Finally, preparations for the spring 2020 study period and the recruitment of additional AF patients in Cyprus, Greece and Israel are underway.





Educational presentations on Respiratory health to primary school children by MEDEA researchers

Presentations to parents regarding the the LIFE MEDEA project

A series of presentations to parents of participating schools were given by MEDEA coordinator, Professor Panayiotis Yiallourous, before the initiation of the MEDEA project in each school. The presentations included primarily information on the health effects of DDS, how DDS are formed and travel from source to other countries and the primary aims of the MEDEA project. A discussion with the parents was encouraged and many questions were answered regarding all topics of the presentation. These presentations were organised in an effort to maximise participation rates to the project, but to also raise awareness on DDS events among a wider population.



An informative presentation on MEDEA project to parents of primary school children conducted by Professor P. Yiallourous

Asthma panel: Recruitment of Asthmatic Children for the second study period

During the fall of 2019, MEDEA researchers carried out initial visits to primary schools for the identification and recruitment of asthmatic children aged 6 to 11 years old for the second study period. For this study period the recruitment expanded in Cyprus to include 4 private schools in Limassol (Cyprus) as well as 6 public ones in Nicosia (Cyprus). In Heraklion, (Crete, Greece) MEDEA researchers initiated recruitment in 10 public schools. Similar to the first study period, informative, age appropriate, interactive lectures about Climate Change and the Greenhouse effect, air pollution and DDS events as well as Health and Nutrition and Respiratory health and smoking, were presented by MEDEA researchers to the children. At the end of the presentations, children were handed questionnaires regarding their respiratory health, aimed to identify children with asthmatic symptoms that would be eligible to take part in the MEDEA study. The next phase involved school visits where body measurements were performed on children agreeing to participate in the study. Among other variables, measurements included height, weight, body fat and body water. In summary, more than 3850 children from 18 primary schools in Limassol, Nicosia and Heraklion were screened with questionnaires and more than 140 eligible children have been identified in both countries. The MEDEA personnel is now in the process of contacting their parents in order for these children to be enrolled in the MEDEA Asthma panel study.

LIFE-MEDEA MILESTONES

In September 2019, the LIFE MEDEA project has completed two out of the total four years of its duration. As it enters its most critical period, by the end of 2020, the project is expected to see the completion of the Asthma and Atrial Fibrillation panel studies as well as the completion of all measurement campaigns across all sites (Cyprus, Greece and Israel). Analysis of the collected data and interpretation of the findings as well as an estimation of the socioeconomic impact of LIFE MEDEA approaches will follow during the last year of the project. On the same time, MEDEA researchers across all sites will organise a number of dissemination activities in an effort communicate the projects' outputs and transfer its results to the competent authorities.

Towards the better preparation for the years ahead, the MEDEA consortium had a two day meeting in Nicosia, Cyprus during November 14th-15th 2019. The meeting allowed for the review of the progress up to date and the examination of the problems encountered in an effort to tackle any ongoing challenges. Furthermore, during the meeting, the 3rd monitoring visit by the project external monitors (Neemo), on behalf of the project funding body (EASME EU), was carried out. Lastly during November 2019, the LIFE MEDEA mid-term report was submitted to and approved by EASME.



Third Annual Monitoring Visit, 15 November 2019, Nicosia, Cyprus

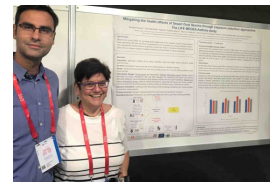
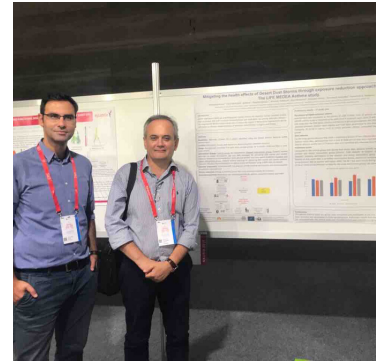
LIFE-MEDEA outreach and participation in events

Dissemination of MEDEA preliminary results

European Respiratory Society Congress, September 2019, Spain

5th Annual Public Health Day, October 2019, Cyprus

The preliminary results of the Asthma panel study first year were presented at the annual European Respiratory Society's (ERS) International congress on the 28th of September 2019 in Madrid, Spain by Professor Panayiotis Yiallourous, Dr Panayiotis Kouis and Dr Eleni Michaelidou. The ERS International Congress is the largest respiratory meeting in the world that brings together professionals from all areas of respiratory medicine. A similar presentation was also given at the 5th annual Public Health Day at the Cyprus University of Technology in Limassol by Dr Souzana Achilleos.



Participation in the 10th Panhellenic Pediatric Allergy Congress

Dr Eleni Michaelidou, a pediatric pulmonologist and the Director of the National Health System Pediatric Clinic at the General University Hospital of Heraklion, presented the preliminary MEDEA results at the 10th Panhellenic Pediatric Allergy Congress in Athens on behalf of the Greek MEDEA team.



Contribution on the ongoing dialogue for Climate Change in Cyprus

Dr Marina Neophytou, an Associate Professor at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Head of the Environmental Fluid Mechanics Laboratory at the University of Cyprus and collaborator at the MEDEA project, recently provided critical insight regarding the Cyprus National Plan for Energy and Climate for the period 2021-30. More specifically, in an article published at paideia-news.com she states that the Draft National Plan won't be achieving the first of its three main goals of reducing Greenhouse gas emissions by the proposed deadline while the current version of the National Plan does not adequately document the methodology and actions that concern the other two main goals about Renewable Energy sources and Energy Efficiency. Dr Neophytou also suggests the utilisation of green tax policies as well as incorporation of tree planting as part of the National Plan. On the same time Dr Neophytou highlights the need to incorporate the utilisation of renewable energy sources set to gradually replace natural gas and other fossil fuels for energy generation.



The LIFE-MEDEA documentary

The Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC), a MEDEA partner, in association with Tetractys Films, is continuing filming for the documentary on DDS events and related health effects. During the past months, the film crew visited an asthmatic patient's house where they interviewed both the child and their parents about their experience with DDS events, and their participation in the MEDEA project in Spring/Summer 2019. They also had the opportunity to film the equipment installed inside and outside the house. In addition, the film crew visited the Cyprus Department of Meteorology of the Ministry of Agriculture, where Dr Filippos Tymvios, Senior Meteorological Officer and the Head of the Aeronautical and Synoptic Section explained how forecasts for DDS events are carried out in Cyprus and filmed parts of the meteorological work involved in the process. The documentary will air (CYBC) upon the completion of the project in 2021.



Introducing the newest members of LIFE MEDEA



Dr Ioannis Anastasiou studied Medicine at the University of Athens and has specialised in Cardiology and Critical Care at the Venizeleio Hospital in Heraklion, Crete. Dr Anastasiou has extensive experience in the conduct of clinical trials especially in the field of heart failure. He joined the MEDEA project in September 2019 and he is responsible for the recruitment and follow-up of atrial fibrillation patients in Crete.

Dr Andreas M. Matthaïou studied Medicine at the Medical School of the University of Cyprus. Following his graduation in 2019, he has been involved in biomedical research, primary in the field of respiratory hereditary diseases. Since October 2019, he is part of the MEDEA team at the University of Cyprus and is involved in the follow-up of patients in both panel studies in Cyprus.



Mrs Elisavet Gerasimatou possess extensive experience in managerial and sale positions in the private sector. Since September 2019, she relocated to Heraklion and joined the MEDEA team at the University of Crete. Her current responsibilities include administrative and secretarial support for the Asthma panel study.

Mr Costas Karanikolas is a biologist with keen interest in environmental applications and technologies. He joined the MEDEA project in November 2019 and is mostly involved in the set-up and maintenance of air cleaners as well as outdoor and indoor particles samplers in Cyprus.



Mrs Adi Abargel is currently in the 4th year of her nursing studies and since January 2020, she joined the Israeli MEDEA team at the Soroka Clinical Research Center. She will be involved in the atrial fibrillation panel study and will support the recruitment and monitoring of atrial fibrillation patients in Israel.

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FIND US ON THE LIFE-MEDEA OFFICIAL WEBSITE

