

Report on the outcomes of a Virtual Mobility¹

Action number: CA18211

Grantee name: Daniela Drandic

Virtual Mobility Details

Title: Planning Home Birth During the Pandemic Phase II

Start and end date: 1/06/2023 to 8/7/2023

Description of the work carried out during the VM

This VM was a continuation of a previous VM funded by the COST action, that prepared a survey. In this VM, next steps were taken to prepare that survey for data collection.

Conducted tasks (collaboration with co-authors, data collection, initial analysis, preparation of framework for paper-publication) that contributed to the implementation of a survey on why women planned home birth during the COVID-19 pandemic in different countries. Specifically:

- Researched and tested survey tools to find an affordable and appropriate one (in the end choice was made to use Slovene tool 1KA.si)
- Uploaded the survey in English and Croatian (available on 1KA survey tool)
 - English: <https://www.1ka.si/a/d31c1cb8>
 - Croatian: <https://www.1ka.si/a/d31c1cb8?language=4>
- Tested survey with sample of target population
- Obtained Ethics Approval (University of Rijeka, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, approved 10 July 2023)
- Prepared promotional materials, including
 - Design and upload of website (<https://homebirthcovid.com>)
 - Social media pages to act as hosts of promotional campaign (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089633541981>)
 - Preliminary planning of campaign and design of materials (featured on Facebook page above, but also screenshotted below in this report)
- Networked with colleagues from countries with similar health systems for translations (currently discussing translations to Bosnian Standard Language, Serbian and Slovene)

Deviations from the initial plan

¹ This report is submitted by the grantee to the Action MC for approval and for claiming payment of the awarded grant. The Grant Awarding Coordinator coordinates the evaluation of this report on behalf of the Action MC and instructs the GH for payment of the Grant.

It took longer than anticipated to receive ethics approval, which was obtained in early July. Next steps include finalising the partner plan for translations and moving forward with the distribution of the survey (planned after the summer holiday period, in September 2023) and launching a 3-month social media campaign.

Description of the VM main achievements and planned follow-up activities

This VNG has contributed to the achievement of the Action's overall objective by adding to the translation of knowledge and best practices and share them across Europe – why women in Europe planned home birth during the COVID pandemic, whether these reasons were related to previous birth trauma or whether the women reported negative experiences during planned home birth during the pandemic.

This contributed to the specific objective of developing a common understanding of factors that may make women vulnerable to perinatal mental health disorders (changes to maternity services based on COVID measures that caused women to planned birth outside of facilities); it has contributed to capacity building by building a multidisciplinary and European network of researchers in maternity care (different countries that will translate and distribute the survey in later phases).

This report is the result of re-submitted application, which was re-submitted in agreement with the COST Team because the ethics approval phase of the survey (and as such, the beginning of the dissemination and data collection) took longer than anticipated.

Regarding deliverables, this VMG contributed to WG1. Although COVID was not specifically included in the project application (because the Action began before the pandemic), mapping why women planned out-of-hospital birth during the pandemic can contribute to the research conducted in WG1.

This VMG could potentially contribute to WG2, specifically the policy analysis in M2.4, by introducing information on what difficulties women who planned home birth faced during the pandemic.

Finally, it has contributed to WG3, describing women's experiences in birth (mapping maternity service provisions for planned home birth during COVID).