



Announcing the EUthyroid2 Project: Improving low awareness of iodine deficiency among adolescents and young women

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A 4-year EU2.5 million grant has been awarded to the EUthyroid2 Consortium of educational institutions and other partners working to improve iodine status both in Europe and beyond. The Horizon Europe-funded project aims to find best practice models for accessing young people, especially young women, to improve awareness of their iodine status.

Insufficient iodine during pregnancy leads to lasting brain damage that reduce a child's IQ by 8 to 10 points. Even mild to moderate iodine deficiency at school age can reduce IQ by 3-5 points. It can easily be prevented through iodine fortification programmes, most commonly by iodization of salt for human and animal consumption.

The first EUthyroid consortium's evaluation of iodine deficiency prevention programmes in Europe uncovered major limitations in awareness of the importance of iodine nutrition for healthy living. "EUthyroid2 will now fill important gaps in the prevention of iodine deficiency in Europe and beyond," according to CORDIS, the European Commission's research results organization.

The project involves implementation studies and community-based randomised controlled trials to increase iodine-related awareness in adolescents and young women up to age 24 pre-pregnancy. The multimodal interventions in two settings – educational systems and ambulatory care – will take place in eight study regions, including countries such as Norway, Denmark, Cyprus, the United Kingdom, Slovenia, Sweden, Poland, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

"Iodine deficiency imposes tremendous costs on the healthcare systems of affected regions, but can easily be prevented", said Dr. Henry Völzke, MD, who coordinates the project for the University Medicine Greifswald, Germany. "As a public health project, EUthyroid2 is not only science, but will also serve our societies. By finding models to raise the awareness on the importance of iodine for a healthy life in young people, EUthyroid2 will lay the foundation for a cost-effective way to eradicate iodine deficiency-related disorders".

The project brings together the expertise of renowned epidemiologists, endocrinologists, nutritionists, health economists and communications specialists from a broad range of educational institutions and countries. Other partners with broad global reach include the Iodine Global Network, Thyroid Federation International and the World Iodine Association.

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