



Joint Action
on REspiratory
Diseases

March - April 2026

Newsletter

Joint Action on REspiratory Diseases (JARED)

Subject: Enhancing Lung Health Across Europe
JARED's Latest Progress & Opportunities

Welcome to the 4th Newsletter of the JARED JA!

We are pleased to share a new issue featuring the latest updates and insights. In this edition, you will find key developments, project highlights, and recent progress across ongoing activities, offering a comprehensive overview of current work and achievements.

Through its engagement in the High-Level Forum on Lung Health in Brussels, JARED highlights Europe's collective effort to strengthen respiratory health by promoting early detection, prevention and fair access to care through cross-border, data-driven cooperation. In its first year, the consortium also emphasized that lasting improvement in outcomes for lung conditions depends on continued joint action, knowledge sharing and aligned strategies across Europe.

Also, the NKIP-led study in Croatia and Hungary reveals that family caregivers of people with COPD face a substantial emotional, physical and social burden that worsens with disease severity, highlighting the urgent need for clear, practical and accessible support tools to improve their wellbeing and sustain long-term care.

Furthermore, the Andalusian Health Service (SAS) ensures the JARED project's coherence, quality, and strategic alignment by continuously monitoring progress, evaluating outcomes, managing risks, coordinating partners across work packages and delivering key reports to support effective, evidence-based implementation in line with public health priorities.

In addition, the JARED multi-country survey led by MUW reveals wide variations and often unclear division of responsibilities between primary and secondary care in chronic respiratory disease management across Europe, where systemic barriers and uneven access to diagnostics and digital tools contribute to inefficiencies and inequalities, underscoring the need for clearer roles, stronger coordination and integrated, evidence-based care pathways to improve patient outcomes.

Also, the JARED-developed ILD patient pathway introduced by PSCUH in Latvia provides general practitioners with a structured, multidisciplinary diagnostic algorithm designed to enable earlier detection, faster specialist referral, and more coordinated care for interstitial lung diseases, ultimately reducing delays, improving patient outcomes, and strengthening the efficiency of the healthcare system.

What is more, in its first year, JARED JA- led by NCPHP and supported by multiple European partners - has built a strong evidence base on smoking cessation and prevention, particularly around emerging nicotine products, by mapping national practices, identifying gaps through professional input and advancing toward targeted training, updated guidelines and focused support for vulnerable groups to drive more effective, coordinated public health action for a healthier, smoke-free future.

Last but not least, meet the leaders of the WPs, who- through their expertise and experience- contribute to turning this effort into reality, together with the support of their teams.

Keep reading - be part of our community!

ONE YEAR OF JARED

Strengthening European collaboration for better lung health

Let's celebrate together - progress across the JARED Joint Action

The JARED Joint Action continues to make steady progress in strengthening respiratory health across Europe. Recent milestones and deliverables highlight advances across multiple levels - from healthier environments to better functioning health systems and more empowered patients.

Together, these achievements reflect a shared commitment to prevention, coordinated care and improving everyday health outcomes.

evidence-based expertise and supporting practical solutions that can be implemented across countries. Strengthening collaboration at European level remains essential to improving lung health outcomes.

JARED: One Year of Progress in Lung Health Across Europe

On 25 February 2026, the **JARED JA** consortium met online to mark its first year of coordinated European action on chronic respiratory diseases. The meeting, chaired by Prof. Ildikó Horváth, Scientific Coordinator of JARED, provided an opportunity to reflect on progress, strengthen partnerships and reaffirm the shared commitment to improving lung health across Europe.

Prof. Horváth highlighted that the first year was not only about delivering planned outputs, but also about building a strong collaborative structure across countries and disciplines. Partners have met key milestones and contributed to a more coordinated European approach to respiratory diseases.

Opening remarks from José Luis Castro, **World Health Organization (WHO)** Special Envoy for Chronic Respiratory Diseases, emphasized the continued high burden of these conditions in Europe and the urgent need for early diagnosis, prevention, and stronger integration of lung health into primary care. He also stressed that many interventions still occur too late in the disease course.

Joanna Chorostowska-Wynimko, President of the **European Respiratory Society (ERS)**, underlined the alignment between JARED and the ERS mission in science, research, education, and advocacy, and highlighted the importance of a comprehensive approach across respiratory diseases.

The consortium also reviewed progress in prevention, early detection, and care pathways, with particular attention to vulnerable populations and health inequalities. Synergies with other European initiatives, including *SOLACE*, *JA NCD Prevent*, *JACARDI*, *LH4L* and *JA-SAFE*, were highlighted as key to strengthening coordinated action.

As JARED moves forward, the focus remains on prevention, early diagnosis, equitable access to care and sustained collaboration to improve lung health across Europe.

JARED in Brussels: driving forward action on lung health in Europe

On 24 February 2026, **JARED JA** participated in the High-Level Forum on Lung Health in Brussels, organized by the **European Lung Health Group (ELHG)**, bringing together policymakers, EU institutions, patient representatives and healthcare professionals.

The discussions focused on how Europe can strengthen prevention, improve early diagnosis, and ensure more equitable access to care for people living with chronic respiratory diseases. Despite the fact that many of these conditions are preventable, millions of patients still face delays in diagnosis and unequal treatment opportunities.

A key message of the Forum was the growing need for a coordinated European approach, including the development of a dedicated European Lung Health Plan.

As the EU4Health Joint Action on Respiratory Diseases, **JARED** contributes to this effort by providing



*** Supporting COPD caregivers: new study reveals key burdens and support needs**

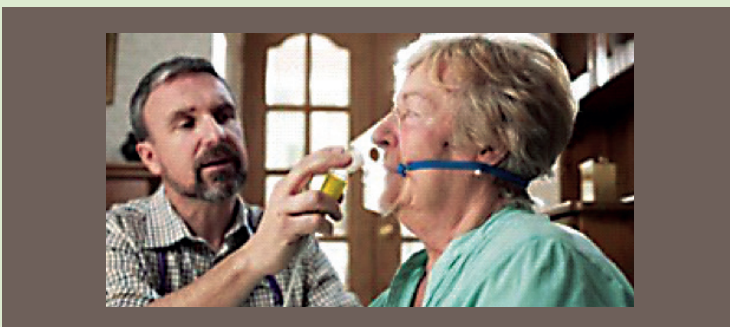
Under the supervision of *National Korányi Institute of Pulmonology (NKIP)*, a mixed-methods study conducted in Croatia and Hungary exploring the experiences of 85 family caregivers supporting people living with chronic respiratory diseases, primarily moderate to severe COPD. The aim of the research was to better understand caregiver burden and inform the development of a practical, user-friendly support guide for families.

The findings showed that caregivers experience a moderate-to-high level of burden, with emotional strain being the most significant challenge. Many caregivers reported ongoing worry about disease progression, uncertainty about the future, and the constant responsibility of care. Social isolation and limited support networks were also common, while physical strain included fatigue and sleep disruption.

Financial burden was generally lower, although many caregivers lacked clear information about available benefits and entitlements. Importantly, greater disease severity was associated with higher caregiver burden, particularly emotional strain, and overall burden was strongly linked to reduced caregiver quality of life. Women and those in certain circumstances, such as rural residence or being a spouse caregiver, were more likely to experience higher levels of burden.

Caregivers consistently expressed a need for clearer education about COPD and its progression, practical guidance for daily care and emergency situations, psychological and peer support, and better access to healthcare and financial information. Based on these findings, the study highlights the importance of developing a structured support leaflet that addresses emotional wellbeing and burnout prevention, provides simple and practical disease education, offers step-by-step caregiving guidance, improves navigation of healthcare systems, and includes information on financial and administrative support, all aimed at improving caregiver quality of life.

Overall, the study concludes that caregiving in chronic respiratory disease places a significant and multifaceted burden on families, and that accessible, targeted support tools are essential to reduce strain and strengthen caregivers' ability to provide sustained care.



*** World Tuberculosis Day: a continued call for action**

On World Tuberculosis Day, the JARED Joint Action highlighted the continued burden of TB in Europe and worldwide, despite medical advances.

TB remains a significant public health challenge, with millions of cases annually, rising childhood infections, drug-resistant strains and treatment success rates still below global targets in many countries.

Within JARED JA, TB and other chronic respiratory infections are being studied through data collection and the development of evidence-based recommendations to strengthen prevention and care.

The initiative underscores that tuberculosis is preventable and curable, but only through sustained collaboration and resilient health systems.

On the World TB Awareness Day, an informational leaflet was developed with the aim of raising awareness among the general public and especially among healthcare professionals, who play a demanding role in providing information, prevention and treatment.

Please check our leaflet on our social media channels as well as on the official website of our programme.

<https://europeanlung.org/jared/2026/03/24/press-release-on-the-occasion-of-world-tuberculosis-day/>

Variability and Structural Gaps in Chronic Respiratory Disease Management Across Europe: Evidence from the JARED Study

Building on the **previous update** from the JARED project on the organization of care for chronic respiratory diseases (CRD) in Europe, this newsletter issue **presents more detailed results** from the multinational survey.

A multi-country survey conducted within the JARED project by **Warsaw Medical University (MUW)** examined how chronic respiratory disease (CRD) care—including asthma and COPD—is organized across Europe, with a focus on the division of responsibilities between primary healthcare (PHC) and secondary healthcare (SHC), as well as the use of digital health tools.

The study collected 739 survey responses from 14 European countries, with 293 fully completed questionnaires from 10 countries included in a final analysis that constitutes a Milestone for JARED programme. It targeted healthcare professionals working in both primary and secondary care settings and assessed how care pathways are structured, how responsibilities are shared and what barriers exist in delivering effective CRD management.

- Results show that while a shared-care model is most commonly reported, there is substantial variation across countries in how tasks are allocated

between PHC and SHC. In some healthcare systems, **specialists in SHC take the leading role in diagnosis and treatment decisions**, while in others PHC plays a stronger role or responsibilities are more evenly distributed. However, in many settings, *roles are not clearly or formally defined, leading to inconsistencies even within the same country.*

- Key barriers identified include **long waiting times for specialist consultations, shortages of respiratory specialists, limited consultation time and weak coordination and communication between care levels**. Respondents also highlighted **unequal access to essential diagnostic tools** such as spirometry, as well as **inconsistent availability and awareness of digital health solutions** that could support CRD management and improve care coordination.
- Overall, the findings reveal **significant heterogeneity** in CRD care pathways across Europe and suggest that unclear task distribution contributes to inefficiencies, delays in diagnosis and treatment and unequal access to care. The study emphasizes the need for **clearer role definitions between PHC and SHC, improved coordination mechanisms, better integration of diagnostic resources and wider adoption of effective digital health tools.**
- The results will be used to inform evidence-based, context-sensitive recommendations and best practice guidelines aimed at **optimizing care delivery, strengthening collaboration** between healthcare sectors and **improving outcomes for patients** with chronic respiratory diseases.

Quality, Evaluation and Impact

Andalucian Health Service (SAS) supports the overall quality, coherence and strategic alignment of the JARED project. It ensures that all activities are monitored, evaluated and aligned with project objectives and public health priorities.

Through continuous internal evaluation and structured reporting, it provides ongoing feedback to partners and strengthens coordination across all WPs, supporting effective implementation and decision-making. It monitors progress, identifies potential risks early and helps coordinate timely responses to ensure project activities remain relevant and impactful.

In addition, it is responsible for key reporting outputs, including the upcoming interim report, which will summarise progress and outcomes from this phase.

Overall, **Andalucian Health Service (SAS)** serves as a transversal coordination and quality assurance pillar within the project, supporting efficient delivery and measurable impact.

Cutting Diagnosis Delays: New Pathway for Diseases

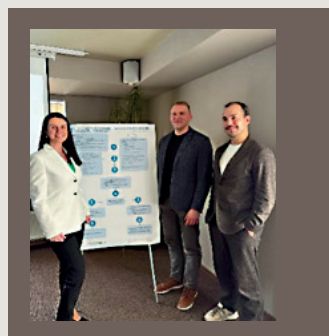
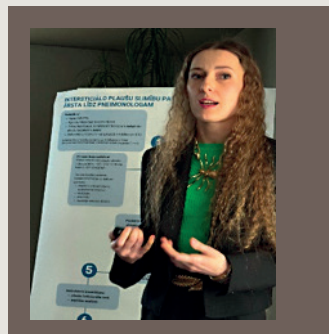
Helping general practitioners identify warning signs earlier and ensure timely specialist care

Specialists from the Pulmonology and Thoracic Surgery Centre at **Paula Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital (PSCUH)** have introduced a new patient pathway for interstitial lung diseases (ILDs) to general practitioners in Latvia's Kurzeme region. Developed under the **JARED's JA**, –EU co-funded project–, this practical algorithm aims to reduce delays in diagnosis and ensure patients receive timely and appropriate treatment.

Interstitial lung diseases (ILDs) are rare but serious conditions where early diagnosis is essential for better outcomes. However, diseases such as idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis are often diagnosed with delays of up to two years, mainly because early symptoms and imaging signs are overlooked. According to pulmonologist Rūdolfs Vilde, a new diagnostic pathway aims to support general practitioners in identifying potential ILD cases earlier and improving timely referral to specialist centres.

The broader lung health situation in Latvia remains concerning. Although awareness is improving, pulmonologist Solveiga Jēkabsons highlights ongoing challenges, including the impact of smoking- particularly among young people- as well as environmental and occupational risks. Preventive measures, such as vaccination and early intervention, are still underutilized.

Rare diseases like ILDs present an additional challenge, as they often go undiagnosed and require a multidisciplinary approach. Dr. Zaiga Kravale emphasizes that access to such coordinated care is uneven across the country. The new patient pathway addresses this gap by streamlining collaboration between general practitioners and specialists,



ensuring patients can access the right expertise more quickly.

The pathway follows a structured process:

- **Initial assessment:** General practitioners identify suspicious symptoms or imaging findings and refer patients for a chest CT scan.
- **Specialized analysis:** PSCUH experts review results and determine the need for further testing or multidisciplinary evaluation.
- **Coordinated care:** Patients are referred to pulmonologists for timely diagnosis and treatment.

This unified approach offers significant benefits. Patients avoid unnecessary repeat consultations and tests, leading to faster diagnosis and better health outcomes. Early treatment also helps maintain patients' ability to work, while the healthcare system reduces costs by minimizing duplicated services. The patient pathway is now available to all general practitioners and specialists in Latvia, with detailed guidance accessible via the National Health Service website.



Boosting Cessation and Prevention Efforts Against Novel Tobacco and Nicotine Products

During the program's first year, teams led by *National Center for Public Health and Pharmacy (NCPHP)* made strong strides in advancing knowledge and capacity around smoking cessation and prevention—placing a special focus on emerging tobacco and nicotine products. Partners across Finland, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Portugal joined forces, each contributing to a growing, shared effort.

From mapping the current landscape to capturing real-world experiences, the first year laid a solid foundation. National analyses highlighted key practices, challenges, and unmet needs in smoking cessation, while health professionals shared their insights through an online survey, helping to identify knowledge gaps and training priorities. At the same time, education professionals across schools contributed valuable input on how tobacco and nicotine prevention is currently addressed among young people.

Building on this momentum, **JARED JA** is moving toward action by developing targeted training materials for both health and education professionals,



with a focus on novel products, proposing updates to cessation and prevention guidelines supported by clear communication tools and completing in-depth analyses on vulnerable groups, including pregnant women in Finland, Hungary and Poland.

The work so far provides a robust evidence base to strengthen national approaches and shape future policies. With continued collaboration, **JARED JA** is driving forward its vision:

A healthier future with fewer respiratory diseases

Fighting Novel Tobacco and Nicotine Products!

Training, updated guidelines and communication materials, with special focus on supporting smoking cessation during pregnancy.



Meet the Work Package Leaders of JARED

Behind the progress of the JARED Joint Action are the Work Package (WP) leaders - experts who guide the project's key thematic areas and coordinate collaboration across countries.

Their work connects research, policy and practice, ensuring that results are not only produced but translated into meaningful impact.



Prof. Dr. Ildikó Horváth
WP1 & WP4 Lead

“Strong coordination and sustainability are essential if research results are to become real improvements in patient care.”



Prof. Tuula Vasankari
WP6 Lead

“Early detection and timely treatment can change the entire life course of people living with chronic respiratory diseases.”



Anastasia Balasopoulou
WP2 Lead

“We must clearly communicate results to raise awareness, inform professionals and influence policymakers.”



Prof. Andrea Vukić Dugac, MD, PhD
WP7 Lead

“A life-span approach means supporting patients not only medically, but socially and emotionally as well.”



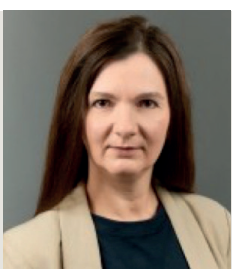
Ibon Eguiluz
WP3 Lead

“Evaluation helps us understand what truly works - and ensures that innovation remains evidence-based.”



Jelena Ostojić, MD, PhD
WP7 Co-Lead

“Living with a chronic respiratory disease is a long journey - our role is to ensure continuous care, understanding and dignity at every stage.”



Ilze Straume
WP5 Lead

“Prevention begins long before diagnosis - our goal is to build healthier environments from the earliest stages of life.”



Brigid Unim, MD, PhD
WP8 Lead

“Reaching vulnerable populations requires trust, collaboration and solutions adapted to real-world challenges.”

Country spotlight

Introducing Hungary - coordinating European action on lung health

Hungary plays a leading role in the JARED Joint Action as the coordinating country, bringing together partners across Europe to address one of the most pressing public health challenges: **chronic respiratory diseases**.

At the centre of this work is the **National Korányi Institute for Pulmonology**, a national centre with more than a century of experience in respiratory care, prevention and research. As project coordinator, the Institute not only provides strategic direction, but also actively connects clinical expertise, research and European collaboration. Its international engagement is reflected in the fact that Hungarian experts continue to play a visible role in shaping European respiratory health agendas.

This work is closely supported by the **National Center for Public Health and Pharmacy**, which ensures that prevention, surveillance and population-level health priorities are fully integrated into the project, strengthening the link between policy and practice.

Equally important is the contribution of the **Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County Central Hospital** and **University Teaching Hospital**, one of the country's largest healthcare providers, bringing frontline clinical experience and real-world patient care into the Joint Action.

Together, these organizations form a strong and complementary partnership - linking coordination, public health and clinical practice and helping turn shared European knowledge into practical, implementable solutions.

IMPORTANT ERRATUM

In the previous edition of our newsletter, in the article titled "Clean Hands, Healthy Nursing Homes", it was stated that *a hand hygiene training pilot program* had been launched in Hungary, targeting nursing homes in Budapest and Miskolc, within the framework of WP6 activities.

The correct information is that the specific program was implemented under the supervision of Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (SPKC) as WP5 lead and National Korányi Institute for Pulmonology (NKIP) as task lead.

The value of this pilot program is not affected by this correction; however, it is important to note the error, as each WP strives to achieve the best possible outcomes within the scope of its assigned tasks. The aim of all groups is to improve the quality of life of EU citizens in relation to respiratory health issues. However, it is also important that the contribution of each team behind every initiative is properly acknowledged.

JARED is on social media

- 🌐 The official social media pages of the JARED-JA on Chronic Respiratory Diseases are now live!
- 🌐 Follow us for our latest news and updates!
- 🌐 We want you to be part of the community!
We are building a network committed to preventing and managing chronic respiratory diseases and improving respiratory health across Europe, the more people join, the greater impact we can make together.

Please take a moment to like and follow our pages. Feel free to share them with your professional network.

Your support helps amplify our mission!

Thank you for being part of the JARED community—together, we breathe for a healthier future!

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/JaredJointAction>
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/jared-joint-action-on-chronic-respiratory-diseases/>