

# eMental-health in Europe

## Accelerating implementation of evidence based treatments for mental disorders



### For more information



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### Sites of interest:

[www.triple-ehealth.nl](http://www.triple-ehealth.nl)  
[www.e-compared.eu](http://www.e-compared.eu)  
<http://mastermind-project.eu>

**Y**early, more than a third of the European population (~165 million a year) suffers from a mental disorder. These disorders, such as depression, have a severe negative impact on the quality of life of those affected and their families. They are notorious for their high social economic costs as well. Depression can be treated effectively with antidepressants and psychotherapies but patients often prefer the latter. In 2010, 30 million Europeans were affected by depression and their number is still growing over recent years. However, half of Europeans in need of depression treatment do not have access to evidence based therapies and psychotherapies are for many not available or affordable. There is thus ample room to improve access to depression treatments and to improve their clinical and cost-effectiveness.

The positive news is that eMental-health may overcome some of the challenges mental disorders, such as depression, impose on European society. The already high and growing penetration grade of PCs, tablets and mobile phones among European citizens strengthen the preconditions necessary for the online delivery of treatments for mental disorders.

Triple-E, the EMGO EHEALTH Excellence Centre of the VU University, the VU University Medical Center and a the large mental hospital GGZ inGeest (all based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands) hosts a multi disciplinary research group consisting of behavioral scientist, psychologists, psychiatrists and mental health therapists. The collaboration between innovative and fundamental research from the Universities combined with applied research in the Mental Health Hospital has created a living lab surrounding in which innovative eMental-health solutions are developed, tested and directly implemented in mental health routine practice and health policy developments. This research group, led by prof. dr. Heleen Riper and prof. dr. Jan H

Smit, is a world leader in eMental-health research which has, in collaboration with research groups in Sweden, Australia and the UK, worked on the development, evaluation and cost-effectiveness of Internet treatments for mental disorders over more than a decade. Their studies have shown that Internet interventions for these disorders are feasible and cost-effective when tested in randomized controlled settings even when compared to face-to-face interventions. These interventions may persuade depressed persons to seek appropriate treatment at an early stage and contribute to overcome health inequalities due to their potential to reach out to underserved groups. We do know, however, little yet about the clinical and cost-effectiveness of these treatments in real life routine practices, or for whom and why they work the best.

These questions are currently addressed in a number of large scale EU projects in which Triple-E researchers are involved. For example, Heleen Riper heads the EU FP7 E-COMPARED project (European Comparative Effectiveness Research on Internet-based Treatment for Depression) in which the clinical and cost-effectiveness of blended CBT treatment for depression is compared to face to face CBT for depression. The issues of up-scaling and translation of results between high and low experienced eMental-health countries is addressed in another EU project named MasterMind, headed by dr. Claus Duedal Pedersen from the Odense University Hospital in Denmark. Applying eMental-health for more complex disorders like bipolar disorder and how to make these devices commercially successful is investigated in an Ambient Assisted Living project in collaboration with Norwegian and UK partners. All these initiatives stress the importance of innovative ICT solutions for healthcare delivery with a strong focus on *patient centred healthcare, personalised treatment and self-management*. They emphasize as well the need to train high potential early career researchers and entrepreneurs within the eMental-health domain.