

Needs elicitation in PRO4VIP: results emerging from the patient and clinician survey

PRO4VIP's partners have designed an online survey aimed at eliciting unmet needs within the low vision field. The targets were both people with low vision and healthcare professionals, ranging from clinicians, to vocational rehabilitation professionals, to operators in the social care field.

The survey was designed as a questionnaire and was distributed throughout the partners' networks. Its design was conducted following an iterative process started in June 2015, which saw the active participation of all the partners.

The purpose of the survey is to collect information regarding:

- the needs and problems people with functional low vision face in their daily life;
- the kind of aids and precautions they use daily;
- their desired experience;
- the desired assistive solutions to improve their quality of life.

Data on responses showed that 263 complete patient questionnaires were received by the end of February 2016. Following, a selection of characteristics of the sample:

- 52% is made of women, confirming the fact that, according to WHO, women are more at risk of becoming blind or partially sighted than men;
- 47% are able to work (32% gainfully employed), and 25% are students;
- 27% are aged over 50.

The areas that respondents assessed as most important were: Mobility and Orientation; Reading and Writing; Independent Daily Life; Independent Living at Home.

3 main unmet needs emerged as the most important:

1. the need for tools that support the display and/or reading of text contents using electronic devices;
2. the need for tools that contribute to the individual ease of movement both in private and public buildings, including tools for helping detecting dangers and obstacles;
3. the need for tools that increase autonomy and independence at home and at work.

Clinician questionnaire received 24 complete responses by the end of February 2016. From the analysis of the data gathered through the survey, the following unmet needs and proposed solutions emerged as the most relevant:

1. **Need:** In retinal degeneration, early diagnosis identification of progression and restoration of lost tissue.
Solution: Adaptive optics to identify early losses.
2. **Need:** Current monitoring systems not online and shortage of resources with respect to the increasing numbers of patients.
Solution: Use of tele-medicine and remote access clinics, and different healthcare professionals to do the job
3. **Need:** Poor access to rehabilitation services, also due to the lack of collaborative thinking between health and social care
Solution: Improved communication systems and easier access to refer between services
4. **Need:** Lack of ability to engage visually at a distance for people with visual impairment. Desired a wearable zoomable magnifier to allow an extended visual reach. Telescopes are available but used less due to social pressure and the rise of technology to place information in one's hand
Solution: discrete, easy to use, minimal user controls.