

Development and user-testing of decision aids for patients for the self-management of four chronic conditions

Rosa Sunol* 1, 2, 3, Claudia Valli 1,2,4, Jessica Beltran 1, Ena Niño De Guzmán 4,5, Marta Ballester 1,2,3, Carola Orrego 1,2,3, Monique Heijmans 6, Oliver Groene 7, Pablo Alonso-Coello 4,8, for the COMPAR-EU Consortium

1.Avedis Donabedian Research Institute (FAD), Barcelona, Spain

2. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

3. Network for Research on Chronicity, Primary Care, and Health Promotion (RICAPPS)

4. Iberoamerican Cochrane Centre - Biomedical Research Institute Sant Pau (IIB Sant Pau), Barcelona, Spain

5.Cancer Prevention and Control Programme, Catalan Institute of Oncology, IDIBELL, Hospitalet de Llobregat, Barcelona, Spain

6.Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research (Nivel), Utrecht, The Netherlands

7.OptiMedis AG, Hamburg, Germany

8.Centro de Investigación Biomédica en Red de Epidemiología y Salud Pública (CIBERESP), Spain

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Introduction

Decision aids (DA) are tools that enable patients to compare several treatment options and make informed choices. These tools include information on the available treatment options, evidence about their benefits and risks with related certainty, as well as practical considerations about the interventions being considered.

Methods

We followed a systematic iterative mixed methods process including:

- 1) Scoping and design,
- 2) Development of a mock-up and prototype,
- 3) User-testing with patients and clinicians.

The first two steps were overseen by a multidisciplinary research team including patients, clinicians, methodologists, and other relevant stakeholders. For the user-testing, we recruited a purposive sample of patients and health professionals until data saturation and conducted semi-structured interviews. We performed content analysis of the interviews and used participants feedback to improve the DA tools.

Objective

To develop an interactive web-based DA for patients with one of four chronic conditions (type 2 diabetes mellitus, obesity, heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) making decisions about self-management interventions.

Results

The DA includes a menu of five modules (**Figure 1**). The first four modules provide information on the health condition and the fifth section provides an overview of the choices made and the relevant research evidence about the effects that can be saved or printed by the users.

Twenty-six participants (type 2 diabetes patients and health care professional) from Germany, Greece, Spain, Malta, Romania and Ireland (**Figure 2**) provided important feedback categorized as:

- **Positive feedback, specific suggestions** (e.g., change the order of the modules),
- **cosmetic** suggestions (e.g., improve the visual of the tables),
- **big problems** (e.g., understanding the content) and **stoppers** (e.g., navigation difficulties).

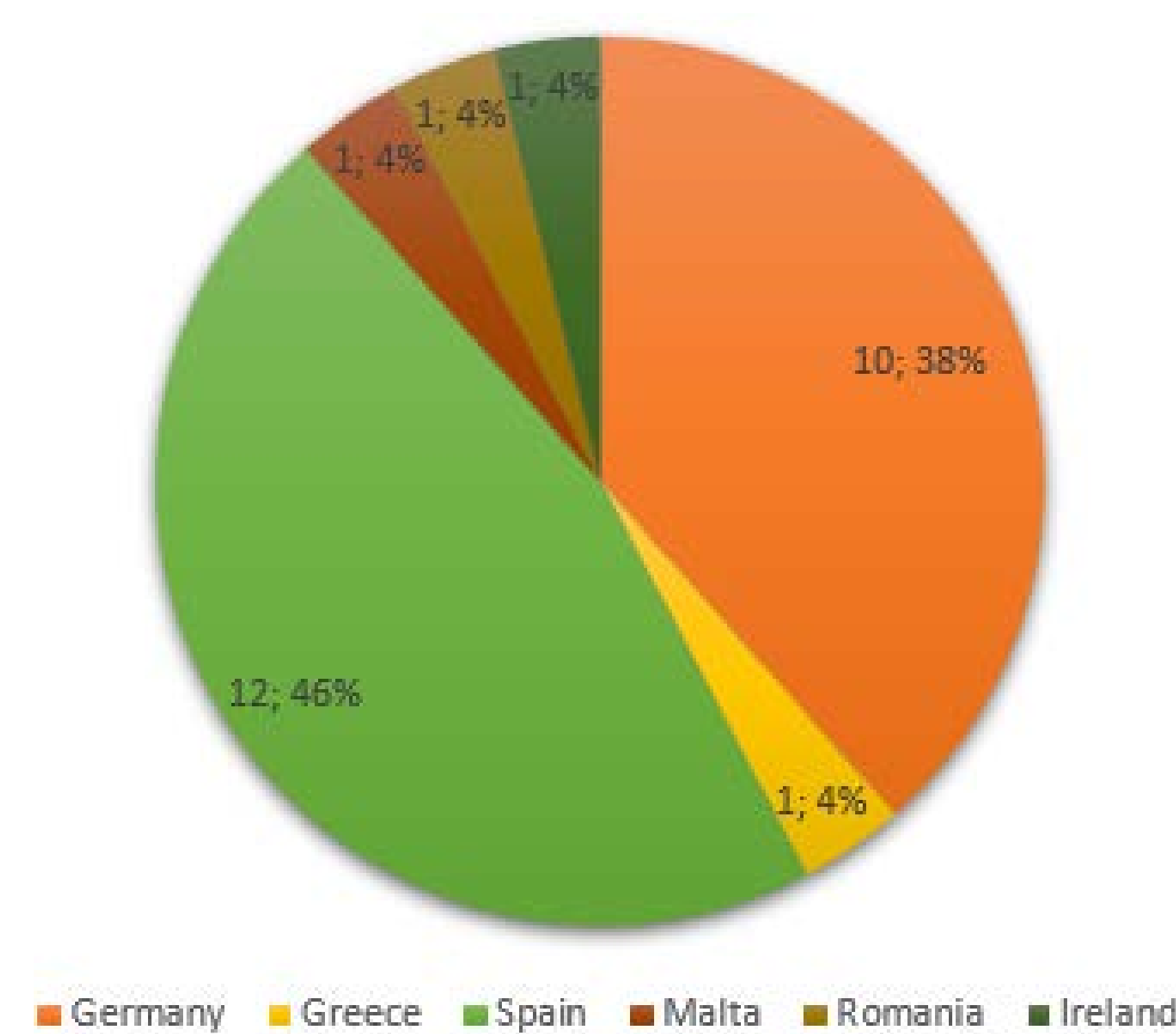


Figure 2. Participants across countries

Conclusions

Overall, participants were satisfied with the decision aid and found it useful. These web-based decision aids can help patients and clinicians to discuss the pros and cons of SMI and facilitate decision-making at the point of care.

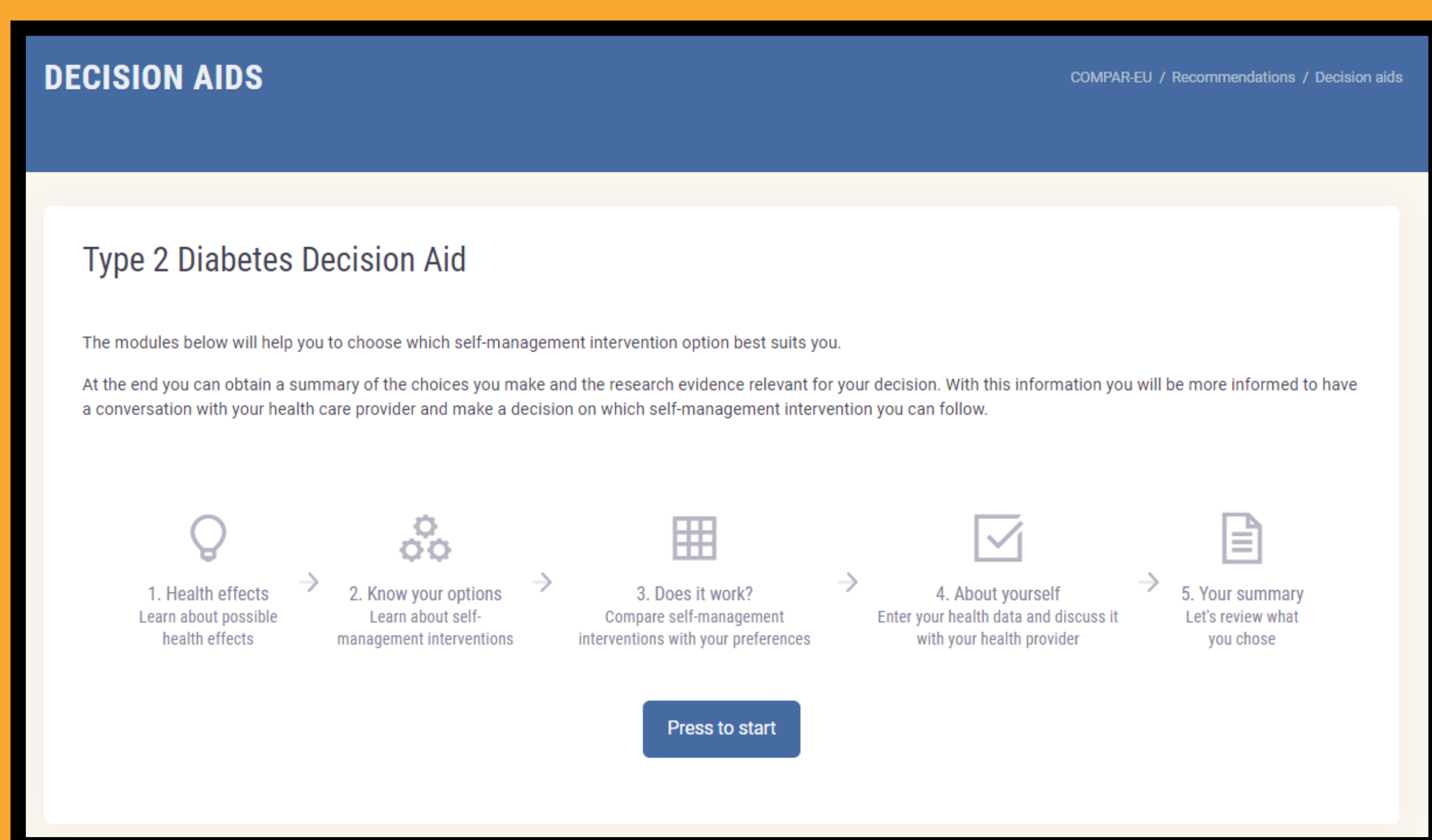


Figure 1. DA modules

