Author’s response to reviews

Title: The burden of chronic diseases across Europe: what policies and programs to address diabetes? A SWOT analysis

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Author’s response to reviews:

Reviewer #1: The authors are to be commended for the large amount of work in bringing all of this information together.

I have some suggestions before I believe this manuscript will be ready for publication.

The title should include diabetes as this is the condition of interest. It is still appropriate to talk to the broader notion of chronic disease in the discussion.

Answer: Done: "The burden of chronic diseases across Europe: what policies and programs to address diabetes? A SWOT analysis."

The manuscript would benefit from substantial editing for grammar and language use. The abstract in particular needs rewriting.

Answer: Done, the abstract and the full text have been reviewed for grammar and language by a professional.

It would be very useful for the reader if Figure 2 referenced each of the challenges and potentials so that the reader could look up the information for future use.

As well this figure would be more useful if the items were grouped according to a chronic disease management model or service provision model. At the moment there appears to be no formal structure to the way they have been presented.

Answer: Figure 2 has been built inductively, as a descriptive model, according to the policy/program pathway: formulation (starting with context analysis), implementation, evaluation.

It is both formatted for display and printing, as it has been differentiated by colour (fuxia=challenges/black=potentials) as well as font style (italic, bold).

The labels are concise descriptors of the categories, as the aim is to give a snapshot of all the emerging
categories and it would be out of the scope of the Figure to be filled with too much content. The paper reports a more detailed description.

Indeed, the model could have been represented as a coding tree, but we would then lose the spiral movement (from the context analysis through the implementation, ending in transferability and dissemination of good practices). We added a short sentence in the Method section in order to make more clear the spiral representation "The “spiral model” aims to describe the policy/programs pathway, from context analysis through the implementation, ending in transferability and dissemination of good practices." In any case, if the Editor considers that a bulleted list or a mind map will make the content more evident, we are available to change it.

Many of the policies have been in existence for a number of years. I would suggest adding a section to the discussion about what is still current, what is working well, what has been stopped and why it was stopped. A table may work well for this. This would then bring this important information up to date.

Answer: A new European Joint Action (Chrodis+) is addressing this topic, the policies/programs are under analysis and will be published following this first publication.

Good luck with your re-submission.

Answer: Thank you for your time and valuable suggestions.

Reviewer #2: The authors present the use of SWOT analysis as a means to describe national strategies for the prevention of diabetes across a range of European countries. They note the wider context of this work to promote 'exchange, transfer and implementation of good practices' as part of a European Joint Action on Chronic Diseases and Promoting Healthy Ageing across the Life Cycle (JA-CHRODIS).

They describe their approach to analysing data obtained via a range of participatory methods from stakeholders representing national diabetes prevention initiatives of 11, and note appropriate use of the COREQ criteria for reporting the results of qualitative research.

Their results succinctly highlight features of policy and programme design and delivery that feel intuitively useful for those who may be in a position of developing high-level disease prevention strategies. In particular, by taking a balanced approach that encourages reflection on what is not working (i.e. weaknesses and threats) they describe specific aspects of diabetes prevention programmes that would benefit from further action to address. The wider context of how policies and programmes play out in practice, and factors helping or hindering this, feel thorough and well mapped out.

The main text has a few minor copy edits required to correct use of language but is otherwise well written.

Answer: Done, the abstract and the full text have been reviewed for grammar and language by a professional.
The authors may also want to consider rewording (or perhaps providing a subtitle?) to Figure 2, to clarify the link between the different categories and the coding tree used as part of the qualitative analysis.

Answer: Done, we added further explanation for the “spiral model” in the Methods section

Overall I found the article informative and would recommend it to those who are considering how to embed reflective practice into the processes of health and care policymaking at a national level.

Answer: thank you for your time and valuable suggestions.