“DOMINO – Stop Domestic Violence”. An Educational Mobile Application

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Abstract. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels and can happen to anyone. It is a public health issue that needs to be addressed with health and social care professionals playing an essential role in prevention and early intervention. These professionals need to be prepared through proper education. A European funded project developed “DOMINO - Stop domestic violence” educational mobile application which was piloted among 99 social and/or health care students and professionals. Most of the participants (n= 59, 59.6%) indicated that the DOMINO mobile application was easy to install and over half of them (n=61, 61.6%) would recommend the app. They found it easy to use, and quick access to useful materials and tools. Participants found case studies and the checklist good and useful tools for them. The DOMINO educational mobile application is available open access, in English, Finnish, Greek, Latvian, Portuguese and Swedish, for any stakeholder worldwide who is interested to learn more about domestic violence prevention and intervention.

Keywords. Domestic violence, prevention, mobile education, mobile application, social and healthcare professionals

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1. Introduction

Domestic violence or domestic abuse can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control [1]. In the majority of cases, it happens by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer [2]. Victims of domestic violence may also include a child or other relative, or any other household member. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels and can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender [1]. The vast majority of cases it is experienced by women and is perpetrated by men [2]. Domestic violence includes actions which can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame or injure someone [1].

Health care professionals play an essential role in prevention and early intervention of domestic violence [3-4]. Their attitudes, knowledge and skills are important factors in allowing them to provide proper services in regards to prevention, early identification and intervention [3-5]. Studies among different health and social care professionals [6-8] support the need of education in order for them to be more prepared in their practice. Therefore, more education is needed.

Thus, in order to address the need of education on prevention and early intervention of domestic violence, the Erasmus+ funded project “DOMINO – Educational mobile application for prevention of Domestic Violence” was developed. The overall aim of the project is to increase knowledge, skills and positive attitudes for current and future social- and healthcare professionals. More specifically, within the project the following have been developed: i) a 5 ECTS asynchronous self-study online course in English has been developed (see: https://domino.turkuamk.fi/domino-course/), and ii) a mobile educational application (available in Google Play store).

The aim of the current paper is to present the feedback of the participants in the pilot phase of the educational mobile application which guided the project partners to improve its final version in terms of content and usability.

2. Method

This study is part of the Erasmus+ project “Educational mobile application for prevention of Domestic Violence - DOMINO” (2020-1-FI01-KA226-HE-092548). The consortium of this project consisted of: 1) Turku University of Applied Sciences - Finland (project coordinator), 2) University of West Attica - Greece, 3) Nursing School of Lisbon - Portugal, 4) Riga Technical University - Latvia, and 5) Turku Mother and Child Home and Shelter Association - Finland.

Professionals working in the field of social- or healthcare sector and Higher Educational Institute teachers in social and/or healthcare in the respective partner countries of DOMINO project have participated in piloting the mobile application during July-November 2022. They were asked to download the application to their mobile phone and use it, going through all the sections in order to provide their feedback.

The educational mobile application (Figure 1) includes the following sections: “find help”, “support and prevent”, “check list”, “case studies” and access to the online DOMINO course, as well as general information about the project. Riga Technical University took over the technical aspects of the application development. Due to limited
resources, only Android version of the app was developed. The development process was completed by using Android studio development tool. The application functions were linked with Firebase, supporting wider aspects of the app management. Testing of technical settings were implemented in several phases, until it met with requirements of the project.

Figure 1. DOMINO mobile application.

Participants provided their feedback through an online questionnaire which was developed for the purposes of the current study by the research team and not tested before this study. The questionnaire included 16 closed and open-ended questions about the usability and content of DOMINO educational mobile application. The participants were asked to report their impression about the design and usability of the app, how they will use it as social and/or health care professionals and provide comments about its section of the application and how these could be improved. Collected data were statistically analyzed and descriptive statistics is used to present the results.

Participation was voluntary and no identifying information has been used. All participants, before they consent, they were informed about the study objectives, process and their right to withdraw at any point of the study. Ethics research approval was obtained by the University of West Attica (Protocol number: 71261 - 15/09/2021) and by the Nursing School of Lisbon (Protocol number: 2495-12/11/2021) for the study to be conducted in Greece and Portugal respectively, while in the other countries it was not required according to their national regulations.

3. Results

In the pilot, 99 social and/or health care students and professionals participated in the study. Most of the participants (n= 59, 59.6%) indicated that the DOMINO mobile application was easy to install. The design of the application was found to be mainly good, clear and simple. The participants mentioned that the application is easy to use, and it was seen to provide a quick access to useful materials and tools. Although over half of the participants (n=61, 61.6%) would recommend the app. Quite few found it useful for everyday use (which was expected as this is an application for learning and not for a reference work), but it was considered a good method to learn the basics and get familiar with the topic which was indeed the aim of this application. The different sections of the application received good feedback as well, and especially the case studies and checklist were mentioned as good and useful tools in the app.
How easy it was to install the app?  (1 = Very difficult – 5 = Very easy)

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How likely would you recommend this app?  (1 = I wouldn’t recommend – 5 = I would recommend this app)

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4. Discussion and conclusion

The results of the current study show that DOMINO educational mobile application about domestic violence prevention can be a useful and easy to use tool among health and social care professionals.

There is a growing demand of mobile education and mobile learning opportunities need to be available and accessible for all interested stakeholders. The DOMINO educational mobile application can be integrated in higher education study programs and provides a flexible way of learning. It is available open access for any stakeholder worldwide who is interested to learn more about domestic violence prevention and intervention. The “DOMINO – Stop domestic violence” mobile application is downloadable for Android phones in Google Play store: DOMINO – stop domestic violence. It is available in English, Finnish, Greek, Latvian, Portuguese and Swedish. More information about DOMINO project can be found at the webpage: https://domino.turkuamk.fi/.

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References