



Towards the elimination of iodine deficiency and preventable thyroid-related diseases in Europe

Euthyroid is an EU-funded research project with the goal of harmonising and sustainably improving the iodine intake in Europe.

Iodine deficiency is the most important risk factor for thyroid disease in adults and children. While goitre as a result of iodine deficiency is widely known, it is less acknowledged that thyroid hormones regulate the development of important organs. Therefore, it is advised that pregnant and nursing women should ensure sufficient iodine intake for optimal development of the child. Even a slight iodine deficiency during pregnancy can lead to impaired brain development and thus affect intelligence. In fact, iodine deficiency is the world's leading cause of preventable brain damage and for years the World Health Organization has warned that Europeans are increasingly affected by the consequences of iodine deficiency.

Euthyroid is the first pan-European initiative to take on the challenge of investigating the iodine intake of the European population. This should provide the basis to develop appropriate measures for harmonising and improving the iodine intake in Europe in cooperation with national authorities.

Within Euthyroid 31 partners from 27 countries pool the expertise of renowned epidemiologists, endocrinologists, nutritionists and health economists. Additionally it includes the Iodine Global Network (IGN), which is engaged in overcoming iodine deficiency with 100 regional and national co-ordinators and partners agencies. Both networks overlap significantly, which should support appropriate measures, established within Euthyroid, which will be implemented by national health authorities.

22 Member States of the EU (exceptions being Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania and Slovakia) participate in Euthyroid, corresponding to 94% of the Union's population and in addition five countries from the IGN West Central Europe group are involved (Iceland, Israel, Macedonia, Norway, Switzerland).

Euthyroid goals

The network performs research into the current situation regarding iodine intake and the health consequences of iodine deficiency in the countries involved. A particular focus will be placed on pregnant women and the potential impact of iodine deficiency on the intellectual development of the child. These aims will be accomplished through the following objectives.

- ▶ **Collection of standardised data on the iodine intake of the population**
- ▶ **Comparison of national measures and dietary habits**
- ▶ **Harmonisation and standardisation of data collection**
- ▶ **Analysis of the cost-benefit ratio of existing prevention programmes**
- ▶ **Development of appropriate measures towards an improved and unified iodine intake**
- ▶ **Analysis of three mother-child studies from regions with different iodine intake**

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Further information can be found here:

www.euthyroid.eu

Key facts:

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