



European  
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Horizon 2020  
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## News Release



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### **SPICE is the key to combating Cardiovascular disease**

**Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death worldwide. It accounts for more than half of all deaths in Europe and three-quarters of those in developing countries. By 2030, it has even been estimated that CVD will be responsible for more deaths than all infectious, nutritional, maternal and perinatal diseases in developing countries put together. However, with early intervention, many of these deaths can be avoided.**

The SPICES project is funded by Horizon 2020, the biggest EU research and innovation programme and is taking the lead in ensuring more at-risk patients receive early intervention, thus reducing the threat of heart attacks, strokes and circulatory disease. As part of the 5.9 million Euro project, teams have been on the ground in Uganda, South Africa, Belgium, France and the United Kingdom, analysing the chief barriers and drivers of cardiovascular health among diverse sets of communities. This work is helping SPICES' scientists to identify the best methods for intervention.

Until now, poor information and weak networks of primary care in developing countries have meant patients with cardiovascular risk factors are not being diagnosed early enough. This not only leads to premature death, but also immense emotional strain for families and financial costs for healthcare systems.

Uganda is typical of this dynamic and, according to Geoffrey Musinguzi, SPICES project manager and principal investigator at Makerere University School of Public Health, the country "is experiencing a major shift in causes of death from exclusively infectious diseases to a



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combination of communicable and non-communicable diseases, with CVD risk factors on the rise; and yet awareness and health system preparedness are sub-optimal.”

The SPICES project is seeking to create a situation in which nobody dies because of a lack of awareness about CVD. The end goal of the project is to take the interventions that work on a local level, in various types of communities, and put them to use across society. Hilde Bastiaens, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Antwerp, and coordinator of the project explains; “our main focus is ‘real-world’ implementation, looking at how we can scale up and support uptake of proven interventions to a larger group of people in different contexts.”

The international scope of the SPICES project, with cooperation across continents, is helping scientists grow in confidence that a universal solution is within sight. For Dr Musinguzi, “International cooperation provides a platform for learning and reciprocal exchange, as well as the resources to contribute to CVD prevention in Mukono and Buikwe in Uganda”

The SPICES project is set to run until December 2021, by which time it is expected that significant strides will have been made towards reducing the thread of CVD.

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### **Horizon 2020: Open to the World**

[Horizon 2020](#) is the largest multinational programme dedicated to research & innovation and it is ‘Open to the World’. This means that researchers, universities, research organisations or companies from across the globe can apply to participate in the activities of the Work Programme carried out mainly through calls for proposals. The Work Programme for 2018-2020 represents a major investment of €30 billion, with more than 600 calls for proposals, including a list of 30 international flagship initiatives in areas of mutual benefit.

### **More information about the SPICES project:**

<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/spices/>

### **More information about Horizon 2020 and EU international research cooperation:**

[Horizon 2020  
Participant Portal](#)

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### **If you are interested in interviews or would like more information, please contact:**

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