

ITAMA Project in the schools of Malta



WHO ARE WE?

- A group of doctors working at Mater Dei Hospital within the Department of Pathology and Paediatrics.
- Working in tandem with other doctors in Sicily – Hospital of Messina and University of Palermo.
- Across Limits, company with a role in software production and communications.

Project ITAMA -EU funded project between Sicily and Malta

- 3 year period to investigate coeliac disease
- Generate a software to assist in the diagnosis of coeliac disease
- Potentially avoiding invasive procedures in children



What is Coeliac Disease?

- Sensitivity of the intestines to gluten – a protein found in wheat, rye, barley.
- Multiple ways of presentation – growth delay, weakness, anaemia, recurrent abdominal pain, diarrhoea, food aversion.
- Mostly undiagnosed – long term risk of bowel cancer
- Complications can be avoided by following a diet free from gluten



THE PROBLEM

- A population with yet, an uncertain incidence/prevalence.
- Current practice – case referral and investigation. Large number of children investigated unnecessarily - likely expensive.
- Proposed system of screening- using an inexpensive test and validated questionnaire. More targeted approach for testing of selected cases.



ACTION PLAN – TWO STAGES

Identification of potential cases.

- Information leaflet with consent and validated questionnaire
- Point of care tests - human resources

Confirmation of cases.

- Criteria for further testing
- Investigation and free access to treatment



DATA COLLECTION

STAGE 1 - Large number of children – estimated 20,000
Testing done by appropriately trained personnel.

- Information Booklet + Questionnaire + Consent form
- Point Of Care Test



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WE NEED YOUR HELP

Appoint a Liaison officer for each school

Role: Distribution of Booklets

Collection of Booklets – Highlight participants

Co-ordinate testing



OUTCOMES

- Data generation
- Application of the research to build the computer programme
- Cost-effectiveness of a screening programme
- Inter-regional co-operation and connections
- Possible application of a similar strategy for other autoimmune diseases



**Thank you
for your attention!**

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