

Developing, organizing and running the School-Medicine Theme Day – a community pharmacist activity

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Background

The children of today are the medicine users of tomorrow. Their use of medicines is increasing, they lack knowledge about medicines, are very autonomous in their handling of medicines and do not talk much about medicines with their parents, potentially resulting in drug-related problems.

Thus, medicines education is now carried out by community pharmacists in 80 Danish primary schools (on intermediate level and all over Denmark) as part of the so-called School Medicine Theme Day (SMT).

Developing, organizing and running the SMT requires a lot of interdisciplinary and logistic efforts.

PROGRAM Skole·Medicin·TEMAdag

1-2 weeks PRIOR to the theme day – performed by teacher:

- Survey: Evaluation of the pupils' knowledge and competences on medicine (25 min)
- Exercise: Dialogue about medicine (15 min)
- Exercise: Where is the medication stored at the pupils home? (5 min)
- Information letter to parents (5 min)

The theme day (5-6 lessons – 45 min. each) – run by pharmacist and supported by teacher:

- Welcome and programme review (5 min)
- Exercise: What is medicine? (40 min)
- Drug release experiment (20 min)
- Exercise: Knowledge about painkillers (25 min)
- Read a medicine package insert (40 min)
- Exercise: What is your pain threshold? (30 min)
- Questionnaire about pain in children (15 min)
- Exercise: Medicines Bingo (40 min)
- Medicine Star Race (relay) (40 min)
- Wrap up and rounding (5 min)

2-3 months AFTER the theme day – performed by teacher:

- Survey: Evaluation of the pupils' knowledge and competences on medicines (25 min)
- The pupils eat fruit and sweets sent by the project team ☺

Purpose.

The purpose of the presentation is to describe the development, organization and content of the SMT in order for pharmacists in other countries to learn from the Danish experiences.

Method

A long row of methods and methodologies were and are used for developing and organizing the SMT, such as pilot testing, dialogues, surveys, interviews, workshops, interdisciplinary project team and steering committee meetings, participant-oriented observations, recruitment through external and internal presentations and social media.

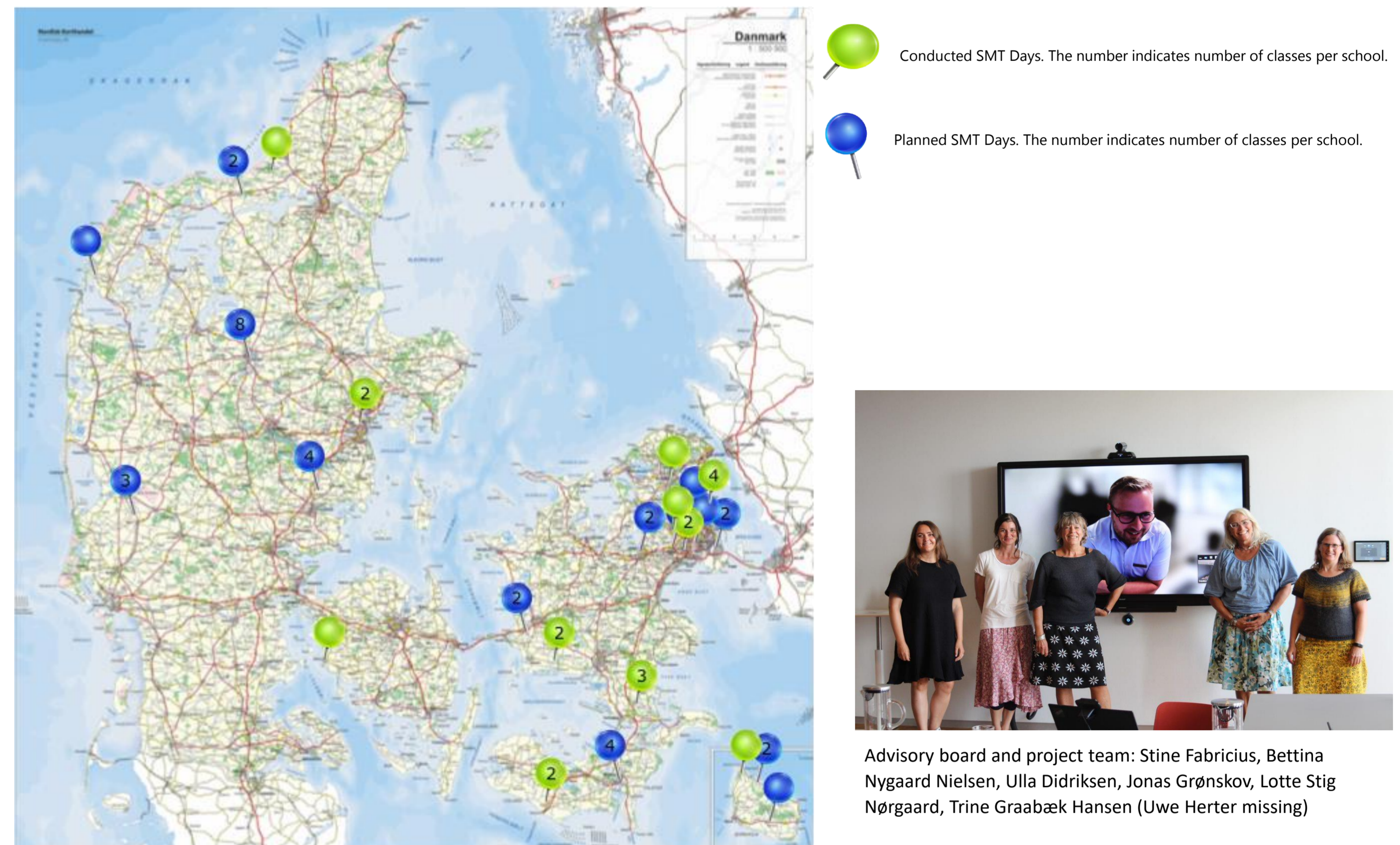
Content

Interdisciplinarity (involvement of teachers, didactically trained persons etc.), sufficient funding, patience, communication and strict time management are some of the ingredients in creating a successful SMT.

The focus area for the theme day was pain and analgesic medication, since most pupils at the intermediate level has experience with pain in school children and weak analgesics.

The SMT itself consists of 11 different educational hands-on activities, including a "medicine at home"- exercise, medicines Bingo, questionnaire on chronic pain for school children, video clip -based dialogue, medicines relay, presentations, PowerPoints, exercise regarding pain threshold, role play, package inserts exercise and drug release experiments.

The SMT also contains a research element, focusing on school childrens' experiences of pain and how longer lasting pain may affect their daily activities in a survey.



Lessons Learned:

Make several *pilot tests* of teaching material before applying for funding

Apply for a sufficient amount of money to do all the *logistics tasks* (recruitment, e-mail correspondence etc) – they take longer than you expect

Apply for funding for *a school teacher* to be part of the project team

Apply for funding for *compensating* the pharmacies in which the participating pharmacist work

Create and maintain an *interdisciplinary advisory board*

Use a variety of strategies to *recruit* schools and pharmacists (social media, school professional networks and other networks, presentations, You-tube videos, blogs, etc)

Develop teaching activities together with school teachers and persons trained in didactics

Choose a focus area for the day e.g. pain and analgesics and relate the focus area to the research element in the theme day

The schools have a tight programme, so *plan the day for teaching well in advance* (several months, preferably half a year) and allow sufficient time for recruitment

If teaching is to be done at the intermediate level, make several *hands-on-based* teaching activities with high pupil activation

Give the class a small *token of appreciation* after participating in the teaching day (fruit, candy, etc.)

Ask the teaching community pharmacist and the school teacher to provide *feedback* on their theme day. Reading about *happy and curious children* can save your day ☺