

SOPOT DECLARATION ON HEALTH PREVENTION BY SPA MEDICINE IN BALNEOTHERAPY FACILITIES

2015 May 21st

European Spas Association (ESPA) members in their annual meeting and General Assembly affirm that spa medicine is a part of prevention and prevention is a part of spa medicine and express their deep and lasting commitment to being major actors of health prevention.

Spa medicine is a curative and preventive approach using natural remedies, rehabilitation techniques, physical agents, education in lifestyle... to maintain and enhance the health status of patients and guests, promote well ageing and favour quality of life. It plays a valuable role in accompanying people with a proactive approach to their health through its different components:

- balneotherapy cares which improve the clinical status of the patients (secondary, tertiary, aimed preventions),
- disease management to help patients with chronic illnesses (tertiary and aimed preventions),
- acquisition of a healthy lifestyle based on nutrition and physical activities, especially relevant for people with weight control and sedentarily problems (primary, selected preventions),
- health education and prevention (primary and universal preventions).

In order to validate and improve the health efficiency of these actions, an appropriate scientific assessment through relevant and robust surveys has to be performed as for any health intervention.

Beyond their ethical and medical interests, ESPA members stress the positive impact of balneotherapy linked with prevention on the reduction of health goods and services consumption, and hence their valuable contribution to the balancing of health budgets.

** Classes of prevention refer to the WHO classification (1948) as well as to the Gordon classification (1982),*

*** On a yearly basis, more than 8 million people benefit from medical spa treatments in EU countries.*