Forum of associations and mechanisms: A communication tool in the sector of brain damaged people
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Aims.– The Neurological Rehabilitation Unit from Aunay sur Odon (Lower Normandy) has been offering, ever since 2007, a forum of associations and mechanisms for people with brain damage. Patients, families, professionals and volunteers of this specific sector meet regularly. The objectives are to create links, to share information on specific after-effects, to promote socio-professional reintegration and work for prevention.

Patients and methods.– Forty invitations were sent in order to foster:
– exchange between professionals and volunteers;
– maintain an information stand for visitors;
- participate in debate about assistance to caregivers.

Two satisfaction questionnaires (exhibitor/visitor), assessing the organizational arrangements, the relevance of events and the overall interest for the forum were distributed.

Results.– Sixteen associations (AFTC 14/50, La Bacouette, France AVC Normandie, La cordée, Handicap citoyen, Handichiens) and mechanisms (UEROS, SAMSAH 14, APF 14/50, Cap Emploi 14, MAS 14/50, MDPH 14, foyer APF) responded positively. Aunay sur Odon had a stand on rehabilitation (posters about cognitive-behavioural and language sequelae, video on rehabilitative practices) and a stand on prevention (with specialists on smoke addiction, alcoholism, nutrition, physiotherapy). There were also lawyers, medical experts and a psychiatrist.

About 300 people were brought together. The questionnaires will be subject to detailed critical analysis; the overall satisfaction level was high for both exhibitors and visitors.

Discussion.– This forum seems appropriate in the context of the tasks assigned to MPR units in the ministerial circular of June 18, 2004: organisation of medical, medico-social and social follow-up mechanisms, patient and family long-term support, assistance by the associations, taking into account the potential for legal compensation.