

MEDIA ADVISORY

EXPERTS CONVENE TO TACKLE THE SOCIETAL IMPACT OF PAIN AND URGE DECISION MAKERS TO PRIORITISE PAIN CARE IN EUROPE

Chronic pain affects one in five Europeans

It's time for the EU to act and make pain care a priority for healthier citizens and a stronger economy. The Societal Impact of Pain's (SIP) 2016 symposium will aim to engage all stakeholder groups involved in future policy making impacting the societal impact of pain.

Pain is a central element of the patients' experience in many healthcare settings (chronic primary pain, postoperative pain, cancer pain, neuropathic pain, headache and visceral pain) and the quality of pain care can be considered an indicator of the general quality of a healthcare system. Yet, patients' pain is poorly assessed and reported and although several studies exist on pain levels in some EU member states, a quality benchmark is not available for consumers and patients in Europe. Chronic pain, which is pain that persists for more than 3 months affects 1 in 5 adults in Europe. Chronic pain is a specific healthcare problem, leading to sleep disturbances, anxiety, depression and low self-esteem among many others. Thus, chronic pain develops into a typical syndrome and even a disease in its own right. Chronic pain then comes to dominate the life of the people concerned and often also family, friends and caregivers.

Pain relief is of primary concern for all those with cancer too. Pain occurs in more than 70% of patients with cancer and in around 80% of patients with advanced cancer and is an important part of palliative care. In the longer term, approximately 5 to 10% of survivors have chronic severe pain that interferes with functioning. We also know musculoskeletal pain causes almost 50% of all absences from work lasting at least three days in the EU and 60% of permanent work incapacity. Pain prevalence is

associated to reduced workforce participation and increased spending on social allowances. The direct and indirect costs of musculoskeletal diseases have been estimated at €240bn each year- up to 2% of GDP across the EU.

Experts at the symposium will discuss:

1. Pain as a quality indicator for health care
2. Chronic Pain: a disease or an underlying symptom?
3. The relevance of pain in cancer care and rehabilitation
4. Pain, rehabilitation and reintegration of workers in the workforce

The outcome of the symposium will include concrete policy suggestions which will be ratified at the plenary on the 24th.

The Societal Impact of Pain (SIP) 2016 symposium takes place under the high patronage of the Italian Ministry of Health. Confirmed speakers include the following MEPs:

- Clara Eugenia Aguilera (Spain)
- Heinz K. Becker (Austria)
- Soledad Cabezon Ruiz (Spain)
- Nicola Caputo (Italy)
- Theresa Griffin (UK)
- Jose Inacio Faria (Portugal)
- Marian Harkin (Ireland)
- Merja Kyllönen (Finland)
- Giovanni La Via (Italy)
- Jeroen Lenaers (The Netherlands)
- Roberta Metsola (Malta)
- Piernicola Pedicini (Italy)
- Sirpa Pietikainen (Finland)
- Takis Hadjigeorgiou (Cyprus)
- Sabine Verheyen (Germany)

Others speakers will include leading researchers and specialists in the field of pain, representatives of key European patients' organisations, and senior Commission representatives.

Interview opportunities will be available on both days of the symposium.

Where

§ May 23: European Parliament, 60 rue Wiertz / Wiertzstraat 60, B-1047 – Bruxelles/Brussels

§ May 24: Concert Noble, Rue d'Arlon 82-84, B-1040 – Bruxelles/Brussels

Registration

Please register at: <http://www.regonline.co.uk/sip-2016>. After receipt of application for registration you will be notified on the status of your registration.

For more information, including speaker bios and fact sheets, please contact Angela Pauly: angela.pauly@bm.com, +32 (0) 2 743 66 44

The scientific framework of the SIP symposium and platform is under the responsibility of the European Pain Federation EFIC®. This year's edition sees for the first time the formal cooperation of the patient community, represented by Pain Alliance Europe (PAE), and the civil society, represented by Active Citizenship Network (ACN), partners for SIP 2016, further providing added value in addressing the topic of the societal impact of pain. The pharmaceutical company Grünenthal GmbH is responsible for funding and non-financial support (e.g. logistical support).

Over 240 international and national pain advocacy groups, scientific organisations and authorities have endorsed the scientific aims of previous SIP symposia and meetings. The objectives of this year's SIP Symposium have been endorsed by over 150 pain advocacy and scientific organisations.