



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF PSORIASIS ASSOCIATIONS

Leading experts call attention to major impact of psoriasis on quality of life

Experts gather for a special side event on psoriasis during the 67th World Health Assembly to highlight the impact this noncommunicable disease has on health-related quality of life

(Geneva, May 22)

Psoriasis is a serious, chronic, inflammatory, non-communicable disease for which there is currently no cure. According to a report from the WHO, the disease affects around 2 percent of the global population, with an even higher prevalence in some countries.

Tomorrow, leading experts on psoriasis will gather in Geneva for a special side event hosted by the sovereign states of Argentina, Ecuador, Panama and Qatar, in collaboration with the International Federation of Psoriasis Associations, IFPA.

“The objective of this side event is to inform our fellow delegates about the severe burden this disease carries for millions of people all over the world, so that they can fully appreciate the importance of the resolution on psoriasis being put forward to this World Health Assembly”, comments Dr. Zelibeth Valverde, Member of the WHO Executive Board and Director of Planification at the Ministry of Health of Panama.

The burden of psoriasis is very often underestimated, yet its sufferers, apart from experiencing painful and itching skin lesions, are also at risk of developing severe and disabling co-morbid conditions such as diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular diseases and psoriatic arthritis.

“Studies show that people with psoriasis have an elevated risk of developing very serious comorbid conditions that not only reduce the quality of life even further than psoriasis in itself, but can even shorten the life span by several years. It is imperative that policy makers are made aware of the importance of ensuring that people with psoriasis have access to the treatment and care they need to control the disease”, says Prof. Wolf-Henning Boehncke, President of the Group for Research and Assessment of Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis (GRAPPA).

In addition to the physical burden of disease, psoriasis is often linked to stigma and discrimination, both social and work-related, as well as depression and alarming levels of suicidal ideation.

Dr Dennis Linder, President of the European Society for Dermatology and Psychiatry, explains:

“People with psoriasis have to cope with other people staring at them, sometimes even avoiding them, as many believe the disease to be contagious. They often have to face stigmatization and discrimination both at work and in their social life. All this triggers depression, and recent research suggests that depression may, additionally, be enhanced by the systemic inflammation inherent to the disease. Finally, psoriasis may even ‘damage your life course’, by causing you to live a life ‘worse than the one you would have lived without the disease’. The burden put by psoriasis can therefore really be extremely high.”

At the side event, Josef de Guzman, President of IFPA’s regional member organization in Asia, PsorAsia Pacific, will be speaking about how disabling psoriasis can be:

“Few may think of psoriasis as a disability, but when you look at the facts it becomes quite clear that many people with psoriasis suffer a number of limitations and restrictions due to their impairments and are faced with enormous barriers in their daily lives as they interact with society. This, of course, has a profound impact not only on them, but also on their families and society in general. As representatives of the global psoriasis community, we are very grateful for this opportunity to inform the World Health Assembly delegates on the many aspects of this complex and challenging disease.”

About the side event:

The side event on psoriasis, titled “Psoriasis: an NCD causing major suffering and impacts on health-related quality of life” will be held Friday, May 23rd at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, in conjunction with the 67th World Health Assembly. The side event is hosted by Argentina, Ecuador, Panama and Qatar in collaboration with IFPA.

For more information about the side event, please contact Ms Susanne Hedberg, IFPA Program Officer Advocacy and Policy, at +46 739 697 273 or susanne.hedberg@pso.se.

About the psoriasis resolution

During the 133rd meeting of the WHO Executive Board, a resolution on psoriasis was proposed and discussed, leading to unanimous adoption by the WHO Executive Board. The resolution is now up for discussion at the 67th World Health Assembly.

To people who are suffering from psoriasis, the resolution is important because it will help to spread awareness and send a powerful, global message that psoriasis is a serious noncommunicable disease (NCD) that needs greater public awareness of its inflammatory nature, psychosocial impacts and shared risk factors with other, more deadly NCDs.

You can download the resolution here: http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB133/B133_R2-en.pdf

About the International Federation of Psoriasis Associations (IFPA)

The International Federation of Psoriasis Associations (IFPA) is the non-profit umbrella organization for the majority of psoriasis associations from around the world. Today IFPA has over 50 member associations covering all regions of the world. IFPA’s mission is to be the unifying global voice of all psoriasis associations, supporting, strengthening and promoting their cause at an international level.

You can read more about IFPA, our members and our activities on our website www.ifpa-pso.org.

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