

Report from the 72nd World Health Assembly – Geneva, May 20th-28th

The main theme of WHA72 was Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Items of interest in the agenda were UHC and preparation of the High-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on UHC (New York, September 23, 2019), follow-up to the High-level meeting on non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and a technical briefing on Mental health. On Sunday May 19, WHO organized the second edition of "Walk the talk", where IFPA representatives participated wearing t-shirts with the IFPA logo and the World Psoriasis Day 2019 logo and slogan "let's get connected".



In the opening plenary session, the address of Dr. Richard Horton, editor-in-chief of The Lancet, mentioned NCDs as accelerators towards UHC. Unfortunately, no mention of NCDs was found in the opening speech of WHO Director General Dr. Tedros, that preferred to focus on UHC, health emergencies, air pollution and healthy lifestyles.

UHC was repeatedly pictures as a political choice that is possible even in countries with limited resources (Japan is an example, as they achieved UHC when the country was poor). In the statements delivered by WHO Member States while discussing the agenda item related to UHC, countries reported the progress done in achieving UHC and noted present challenges (mainly related to financing UHC and difficulties in covering the entire population due to differences within the different regions of the same country). On May 22, **mental health** was the main topic of a technical briefing organized by WHO. The panel included WHO Director General Dr. Tedros and Queen Mathilde of Belgium, very active in promoting the cause of mental health. Dr. Tedros defined mental health conditions a "silent killer", pointing out that they are on the rise and one of the leading causes of disabilities. Support services in many countries are lagging behind, as mental health disorders have always been extremely neglected. After the inclusion of mental health in the 5x5 framework on NCDs, WHO is working on Best Buys for mental health, so we will pay close attention to these processes as mental health is one of the psoriasis co-morbidities in focus for IFPA and its member organizations.

Lastly, **NCDs** were part of the official WHO agenda and were discussed on Friday 24 May. IFPA followed the proceedings closely, considering our past and previous engagement with the NCD community. WHO Member States acknowledged that progress is slow and more work needs to be done. Africa highlighted the challenges in terms of access to services, inadequate capacities, lack of data, inadequate funding, economic impact of the preventive measures. Many WHO Member States applauded the inclusion of mental health in the 5x5 framework, especially Belgium, EU countries



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and Canada. Some countries placed focus on tobacco and alcohol (Thailand, Panama), others on prevention of NCDs (EU). Spain delivered an interesting statement including patients (“patient expectations should be taken into account”). There are diverging opinions on the role of the private sector in the prevention and control of NCDs: while some countries want to include the private sector in the discussion process (Argentina, Singapore, Peru), other are less open to this option (Norway).

IFPA engagement

Statements

IFPA co-sponsored statements on the agenda items 11.5 - Universal Health Coverage; 11.7 - Access to medicines and vaccines and 11.8 Follow-up to the high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly on prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

Social media

IFPA was very active on Twitter (@PsoriasisIFPA; @PSOCoalition) and on Instagram (psoriasisifpa). Statistics for the IFPA and Coalition twitter accounts are reported below. Please visit the above-mentioned accounts for details on the posts.

IFPA (@PsoriasisIFPA)





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Global Psoriasis Coalition (@PSOCoalition)



Likes
88



Retweets
42

