



WHO Europe recognises the importance of promoting musculoskeletal health to prevent and treat the greatest cause of disability in Europe

The World Health Organisation European Region recommends for the first time specific actions by all countries to promote musculoskeletal health in its new Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases. This was agreed by the Regional Committee for Europe at its 66th session on 15th September 2016. This is welcomed by the Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health that brings together the professional, scientific and patient community to make musculoskeletal health a priority. The Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health and EULAR (European League Against Rheumatism) along with the musculoskeletal community have supported the development of the Action Plan through provision of data on the burden and strategies for their control. We now look forward to supporting its implementation.

WHO Europe, in the Action Plan, recognises that musculoskeletal conditions are the greatest cause of disability in the European Region, affecting all ages. They are a major cause of worklessness and, in older ages, loss of independence. Good musculoskeletal health is recognised as a prerequisite for mobility, economic independence and active healthy ageing, and is an important contributor to the prevention of NCDs given the importance of physical activity. Musculoskeletal health is impaired by conditions such as arthritis, low back and neck pain, osteoporosis and fragility fractures, and injuries due to occupation and sports. Risk factors for musculoskeletal health are similar to other NCDs and musculoskeletal health can be promoted by their modification, in particular increased physical activity, ideal body weight, smoking cessation and moderate use of alcohol along with injury prevention. Control of musculoskeletal diseases and prevention of disability depends on availability and timely access to musculoskeletal health systems to enable early intervention and rehabilitation. Services need to be person-centred, integrated across the health community, and orientated towards enabling people to self-manage their musculoskeletal conditions and towards reducing the medicalization of common problems.

WHO Europe recognise that actions in this area could support a number of current WHO action plans but specific actions related to musculoskeletal health are rarely mentioned. Given the importance of good musculoskeletal health to achieving good overall health throughout the life-course or mitigating the negative impact of inadequate physical activity, tobacco, alcohol, and unhealthy diets, there is an opportunity to address this gap. Examples of relevant actions they recommend include:

- promoting musculoskeletal health at all ages to improve physical function by increasing physical activity, reducing obesity and avoiding injuries;
- improving musculoskeletal health across the life-course by
 - supporting children and adolescents through their families and peer

- groups and promoting musculoskeletal health through preschool and school health programmes;
- integrating musculoskeletal health with health promotion and occupational health in the workplace;
- introducing systematic musculoskeletal health programmes for older people, including those living in residential care;
- building musculoskeletal health systems that allow timely access to person-centred care of musculoskeletal conditions, focusing on early intervention to restore and maintain function, and that enable people to self-manage their musculoskeletal conditions; and increase awareness of what can be achieved; and
- strengthening surveillance; and develop a skilled and diverse workforce relevant to musculoskeletal health.

The Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health, EULAR and the whole musculoskeletal community call on member countries of the European Region to implement the Action Plan and call on other regions of the world to recognise the need to address the challenge of avoidable disability due to musculoskeletal conditions.

Please support this Call for Action by signing the e-petition:

bjdonline.org/e-petition/

The Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health of the Bone and Joint Decade



The Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health of the Bone and Joint Decade works to reduce the burden and cost of musculoskeletal conditions to individuals, carers and society worldwide.

The Global Alliance is the only organisation that brings together all stakeholders, considering all musculoskeletal conditions working with policy makers at national, regional and global levels. Launched in 2000, remanded in 2010 and renamed in 2015, the Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health gains its strength from bringing together national and international patient, professional, and scientific organisations with National Alliances in over 60 countries. It is endorsed by the UN and WHO. Together this alliance is driving the agenda to position musculoskeletal conditions as a public health priority.

The Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health is focused on influencing health policy through evidence and advocacy, using its unified voice and global reach.

Our vision is a society where prevention, treatment and care of people with musculoskeletal disorders is of a high standard and consistently accessible in order to give people the freedom to move without pain and be independent. The prevention and treatment of musculoskeletal conditions and injuries should be among the leading health concerns in the minds, actions and funding priorities of policy makers, health providers and the public.

Our mission is to promote musculoskeletal health and science worldwide **to keep people moving.**

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European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR)

eular

fighting rheumatic & musculoskeletal
diseases together

The **European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR)** is the organisation which represents the people with arthritis/rheumatism, health professional and scientific societies of rheumatology of all the European nations.

The aims of EULAR are to reduce the burden of rheumatic diseases on the individual and society and to improve the treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of musculoskeletal diseases.

To this end, EULAR fosters excellence in education and research in the field of rheumatology. It promotes the translation of research advances into daily care and fights for the recognition of the needs of people with musculoskeletal diseases by the governing bodies in Europe.

In 2017 and for the first time, EULAR is launching a 360 degrees campaign involving all pillars of EULAR: patients, physicians, researches and health professionals under one roof. The goal of the campaign is to highlight RMDs as major diseases and a public health concern of pandemic proportions. Early diagnosis and access to treatment can prevent further damage and burden on the individual and society. The campaign will be launched in June 2017 during the Annual European Congress of Rheumatology in Madrid, Spain.

To learn more about EULAR please go to eular.org and search for us on your favourite social media channels.