



CBIG-SCREEN
Project



Cancer Leagues joins EU-funded project to shed light into and tackle inequalities in cervical cancer screening

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Brussels - The *Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)* joins a consortium of 14 partners in a 5-year project to provide vulnerable subpopulations with functioning access to cervical cancers screening and thus improve health outcomes and reduce associated healthcare and societal costs.

Cervical cancer is the third most common gynaecological cancer and the second most common in women under 45 years. **In Europe, over 61,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year and almost 26,000 of them will die of it – each death a tragedy considering that cervical cancer is today a preventable and treatable disease.**

The relatively high death rate has been largely attributed to low vaccination coverage and low cervical cancer screening rates among vulnerable women. Though **screening programmes** have been shown to drastically reduce cervical cancer mortality, they **remain largely inaccessible and underused by subpopulations of vulnerable women**, creating inequality in the European healthcare system and adding to the challenges underserved populations already face in their efforts to maintain their socioeconomic and physical health.

Healthcare inequality is at the heart of **CBIG-SCREEN's effort to provide vulnerable subpopulations with functioning access to cervical cancers screening and thus improve health outcomes and reduce associated healthcare and societal costs.**



The vulnerable subpopulations **CBIG-SCREEN will focus on** are **women of low socioeconomic status**, women **living with HIV or other** sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), **incarcerated women**, **sex workers** and **migrants** who may not have had access to cancer screening in their country of origin but find it difficult to navigate health care systems in their new homes.

The consortium will work in collaboration with these women to identify and develop strategies to meet their varied and specific needs, in order to attract them to the screening programmes, and to retain them from initial test to treatment. Through continuous dialogue we aim to convince policymakers to adopt these strategies ensuring that national screening programmes reach out to promote these interventions to communities of the underserved women.

CBIG-SCREEN will thus create a Europe-wide knowledge framework around barriers to cervical cancer screening and generate policies, programmes, communications and other required services **to meet the needs of these underserved sub-populations of women** with inherent high-risk of cervical cancer and low (perceived) access to proper healthcare routes. **Our interventions aim to reduce health inequality by increasing screening ratios among vulnerable women from 26% to 45% which could ensure 6,000 to 7,000 more women will survive each year.**



Prof Marc Bardou, Coordinating physician at the Clinical Investigation Center Inserm 1432, **who leads the CBIG-SCREEN effort** said: *“Too many policies are built in a top-down approach. We are prioritising collaboration with the target group in order to co-construct the new policy intervention and make them more acceptable. Through engaging all stakeholders, in particular the vulnerable and underserved women themselves, we are aiming to identify their varied and specific needs, develop strategies around them, and convince policymakers to adopt these strategies. By involving and listening to the women that the project seeks to help, we thus believe we can develop*

the required tailored strategies that convince the vulnerable and underserved subpopulations of women to partake and remain in cervical cancer screening programmes.”



David Ritchie, Cancer Prevention Manager at ECL, **who is deputy leader of WP2 and ECL's contact point for WP6 and WP7** added: *“As a disease that is almost entirely preventable, every death from cervical cancer is an unacceptable loss for society. Women in vulnerable and marginalised settings face a double injustice as they represent an unacceptably large proportion of the 26,000 annual cervical cancer deaths in Europe. **If the ambitious targets of the WHO Global Strategy for the Elimination of Cervical Cancer are to be met, immediate action must be taken to cater to the needs of vulnerable women who are currently being let down by us all.** CBIGSCREEN will*

work directly with the vulnerable sub-populations, at high risk of cervical cancer, developing the best methods to bring preventative interventions, which respect their values, needs and preferences.”



The **CBIG-SCREEN** project is coordinated by the [French National Institute for Health and Medical Research \(Inserm\)](#) and brings together public health experts, epidemiologists, regional cancer institutes, a non-governmental institution that promotes gender equity in public health, ECL and the WHO agency for cancer research, IARC.

ECL is WP2's deputy leader and will be active in mapping existing screening policies in all European countries as well identifying key stakeholders and develop stakeholder engagement tools. In WP6, ECL will actively assist the piloting of co-created cervical cancer screening strategies in real-life settings by activating cancer leagues based in the countries of the pilot testing. In WP7, ECL will participate in all dissemination activities and support engagement with political stakeholders via the [MEPs against Cancer interest group at the European Parliament](#).

List of partners:

1. (Coordinator) Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale (Inserm), France
2. Regionshospitalet randers (RHR), Denmark
3. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), UK
4. Azienda Unita Sanitaria Locale di Reggio Emilia (AUSL-IRCCS), Italy
5. Instituto de saude publica da universidade do porto (ISPUP), Portugal
6. Tartu Ulikool (UTARTU), Estonia
7. Universitatea Babes Bolyai (UBB), Romania
8. Institute of Oncology Cluj-Napoca (IOCN), Romania
9. European Institute of Women's Health (EIWH), Ireland
10. international Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), France
11. Ecole d'économie de Paris (PSE), France
12. Health Psychology Research Center (HPRC), Bulgaria
13. Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL), Belgium
14. Inserm Transfert SA (IT), France

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)

ECL provides a unique platform as the only non-profit, pan-European umbrella organisation with the mission of uniting, at the European level, national and regional cancer leagues to achieve a cancer-free Europe. Active since 1980 and located in Brussels, ECL currently has 30 members from 25 countries in the European Region, covering 20 EU member states. ECL's members are cancer charities operating across the whole portfolio - from cancer research and awareness to patient support during and after diagnosis. Cancer leagues are often the main resource for the public for cancer control information and services. ECL's mission is to influence and improve cancer control and cancer care in Europe. This is done by providing a forum and voice for experienced charities and supporting new entrants facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing, primarily in the areas of cancer prevention, tobacco control, access to medicines and patient support, as well as creating opportunities to advocate for these issues at the EU level. ECL also collaborates with global and European institutions, other NGOs and research institutes. For further information about ECL, please visit cancer.eu and follow @CancerLeagues on   

CONTACTS

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ECL Secretariat: David Ritchie, Cancer Prevention Manager, david@european-cancer-leagues.org

Website (coming soon): www.cbig-screen.eu

