

No one should miss out: rehabilitation services are an integral part of cancer care

New Atlas from ECL to celebrate Cancer Rehabilitation Week 2021

Brussels, Belgium – **ECL is launching a new, updated Atlas listing 61 different rehabilitation programmes implemented by cancer leagues across Europe aimed at cancer societies, patient organisations, and healthcare professionals to get inspired and potentially try out new activities.**

Despite the increased number of people diagnosed with cancer every year, the **overall survival rates are improving dramatically** thanks to advances in early detection, effective therapies and supportive care. The number of cancer survivors is growing every year, and is now estimated at over 12 million in Europe. This figure includes around 300,000 childhood cancer survivors, a number which is also expected to rise substantially in the years to come.

While this is a reason for optimism, **survivors, their families and carers can experience significant challenges.** In this context, **we should no longer focus on ‘how long’ people live after diagnosis, but rather on ‘how well and how long’ they live.** Cancer survivors need **rehabilitation to go back to their normal life.**



@cancer_dk

“The good news? More people, young and old, are living with and beyond cancer than ever before! The bad news? The disease trajectory, and especially the treatment itself, can cause significant morbidity and negative late effects that limit physical, psychosocial, and cognitive functioning of survivors. The ugly news? High-quality cancer rehabilitation is not systematically offered to cancer patients across Europe.” said **Bo Andreassen Rix, Leader of the rehabilitation sub-group of the ECL Patient Support Working Group and Head of Documentation and Development at the Danish Cancer Society.**

Cancer Rehab Awareness Week (#CRAW2021) is a perfect opportunity for all cancer rehabilitation supporters and advocates **to take the strong message about cancer rehab to their communities, “no one should miss out!”.** Indeed, as more people live for years and even decades after being diagnosed with cancer, the question of how best to support survivors is a challenge now facing health systems in Europe.



@philippoun

Welcoming the publication of the Atlas, **Nicolas Philippou, CEO of the Cyprus Association of Cancer Patients and Friends (PASYKAF) and ECL Board Member** said: “We know a high proportion of those with a cancer diagnosis are still missing out on achieving their potential and are living with impairments that with rehabilitation could be mitigated, or even prevented. We also know that a wide range of significant barriers still limit access to cancer rehabilitation. Our Atlas highlights how cancer leagues are filling gaps in the system by providing holistic support to survivors and their families in their communities.”

With this **Atlas**, the ECL’s Patient Support Working Group (PSWG), **seeks to inspire cancer societies, patient organisations, and healthcare professionals to try out cancer rehabilitation activities and programmes** in their communities and support patients and survivors in need.

There is still more work to do to put survivorship and quality of life issues into the spotlight of current discussions around Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan, and ECL is motivated to get cancer rehabilitation at the top of the EU agenda. We aim to ensure that patients not only survive their illness, but that they also live long, fulfilling lives, free from unfair obstacles. **We want to ensure that all cancer patients and survivors have the same chance of survival and access to rehabilitation wherever they live in Europe.** More research into survivors’ specific care and support requirements is urgently needed.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Download the Atlas - <https://bit.ly/3eN9VFC>

About the ECL’s Patient Support Working Group - Since 2007, the ECL Patient Support Working Group (PSWG) connects cancer care experts who share knowledge and work together on developing best practice guides and informational materials to raise awareness and improve the quality of cancer care in Europe. The PSWG focuses on a wide range of survivorship issues, including access to insurance and financial services, return to work, caregiver support, sexuality and relationships issues, cancer rehabilitation and palliative care. PSWG members strive to make the patient voice heard in national and European decision-making.

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