

The Active Citizenship Network (ACN) has launched the third edition of the 'European Civic Prize on Chronic Pain – Collection of Good Practices'

Tell us about your way of working with chronic pain and win!

In the framework of the International Association for the Study of Pain's 'Global Year for the Prevention of Pain' (2020), in June the Active Citizenship Network (ACN) launched the third edition of its bi-annual project at the European level – 'EU Civic Prize on Chronic Pain – Collection of good practices', with the aim of highlighting existing good practices across Europe in terms of the struggle against pain. This is a concrete example of work taking place to transfer the recent achievement on chronic pain from the European political agenda to EU culture.

This third edition allows to continue expanding the 'agora' of operators with good practices on pain, encouraging the exchange of experiences among health professionals, healthcare providers, institutions, civic associations, and patient advocacy groups.

The word 'civic' stands for the main characteristic of this initiative, aimed at making the invisible, visible (from the citizens' perspective). Exceptionally, for this edition the Prize also

recognises the outstanding initiatives that have been put in place, modified, or updated to face and mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences on chronic pain patients' lives.

This prize is the result of the fusion of experiences coming from the constituency of pain and the larger constituency of advocacy groups and patients' rights, and provides an occasion for demonstrating what this community can offer in terms of experiences that are useful in raising awareness about the condition, enhancing the body of knowledge of positive cases and success, and strengthening commitment to this topic.

A source of pride

At the beginning, it was difficult to persuade the necessary stakeholders about this opportunity and to obtain first their support first and then their involvement in this European Civic Prize. However, the third Edition, supported by Pfizer, is a source of pride: to those who have complimented us for having identified and catalogued almost 100 good practices around Europe during the previous Editions, we have answered that there will be at



least another 10,000 or 100,000 that we have missed, and in the end we hope that we will come to include them all.

We will continue to strive to recover and promote as many of them as possible, being aware of the fact that from year to year the constituency of the actors sensitive to the fight against pain is widening and becoming increasingly stronger. We are very happy with this result, given the role we plan to play in this area moving forwards.

From the good practices collected thus far, it has become clear that, as often happens, it is the team and not the individual that wins: multidisciplinary medical teams, collaborations between the public and private sectors, dialogue between the world of research and patient associations, the involvement of civil society, etc.; they are present in most of these experiences. Moreover, the fact the Second Edition apps won all the prizes available to it also says a lot about the growing importance of digital health in this field.

The health of healthcare system

We like to think that good practices are also a small but significant indicator of the health status of our healthcare systems, which have long been under pressure between the need for economic sustainability and the high expectations of the population. Health protection as a common good should be the common denominator that unites the many stakeholders involved in the health sector, in the same way as the fight against every form of inequality in access to therapies and the guarantee of the quality standards. The area of



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Paolo Notaro, Director of the Pain Care Unit at Niguarda Hospital (Italy), the winner of the Second Edition category 'Professional Education' with 'Supporting Local Pain Care Network development and Patient Empowerment Through M-Health: The Case of the RED App, a Compass for Patients and Healthcare Professionals' (Brussels, 6 November, 2019)



Monika Benson, Executive Director of Dystonia Europe, the winner of the Second Edition category 'Patients' Empowerment' with 'MyDystonia - a Digital Diary for Dystonia Patients by Dystonia Patients' (Brussels, 6 November, 2019)

pain is no exception: reducing inequalities to allow a better quality of life for people suffering from chronic pain is the challenge we are going to face in the coming years.

The award is open to any healthcare stakeholder: patients' associations, health professionals, private and public hospitals, universities, etc., and the good practices must fall under one of the following categories, described as the following:

■ **Patients' empowerment:** Good practices providing information, creating information campaigns, supporting and fostering capacity-building for individual patients with chronic pain and their relatives, including their social, psychological, and other impacts. This also includes partnerships between

patient organisations and other stakeholders (health professionals, public institutions, media, healthcare industry, etc.) to empower patient and civic organisations so that patients can understand their rights and make informed choices;

■ **Innovation:** Good practices concerning laws, technologies, apps, devices, events, theatrical performances, etc;

■ **Clinical practices:** Good practices concerning pain management (prevention, diagnosis, treatment and monitoring), dedicated units, therapeutic pathways, clinical records, ways of measuring pain, etc.



Janosch Priebe, Senior research fellow at the Technical University of Munich's Center of Interdisciplinary Pain Medicine, Germany, the winner for the category 'Clinical Practices with the digital health solution' with 'Rise-uP'

Practices involving patients were highly valuable; and

■ **Professional education:** Undergraduate and postgraduate education for healthcare professionals, training courses in hospitals/clinics, updating general practitioners, etc.

An independent Jury Panel composed of international experts in chronic pain (from universities, healthcare professionals and providers' organisations, civic and patients' associations, etc.) will select the four winners of the prize, one for each above-mentioned category.

The winners will be offered the opportunity to share their projects during the Award ceremony, a public European meeting pain-related, and a publication in English in a suitable journal.

The application form, as well as the guidelines and more details, are available on ACN's website: www.activecitizenship.net.



Marine Cotty, Director of Lucine Group (France), the winner of the Second Edition category 'Innovation with the digital health solution' with 'DTX FOR PAIN' (Brussels, 6 November, 2019)

Mariano Votta
Responsible EU Affairs at
Cittadinanzattiva and Director at
Active Citizenship Network

Daniela Quaggia
Senior Project Manager
Active Citizenship Network

+39 06 36718351

m.votta@activecitizenship.net
Tweet @Cittadinanzatti
Tweet @activecitnet
www.cittadinanzattiva.it
www.activecitizenship.net