

SOCIETAL IMPACT OF PAIN (SIP) 2016 *

8 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS: TIME FOR ACTION



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Background and Objectives:

The burden that pain imposes on individuals and the enormous costs that society has to bear, not only by healthcare systems, but also related social, economic and employment costs, illustrate the urgency for European governments and the EU institutions to act and to put the societal impact of pain on their policy agenda. Basic and clinical sciences have demonstrated the feasibility of care pathways out of pain for many types of acute and chronic pain, but healthcare systems frequently do not guarantee general access for patients to these.

In order to address the societal impact of pain, different stakeholder groups joined forces in 2009 and created the multi-stakeholder platform Societal Impact of Pain (SIP) with the aims

- To raise awareness of the relevance of the impact of pain on societies, health and economic systems
- To exchange information and share best-practices across all member states of the European Union
- To develop and foster European-wide policy strategies & activities for an improved pain care in Europe

Information about national initiatives and best practices within Europe are shared during annual SIP symposia and as well on the SIP website <https://www.sip-platform.eu> and via regular newsletters.

The SIP symposium 2016 has been organized under the title "Time for Action". The goal has been to discuss and define in four different working groups concrete policy recommendations for implementation.



Methods

The SIP 2016 symposium hosted four working groups while bringing together representatives of the European institutes, policy makers, pain specialists, scientific researchers, patient representatives and other stakeholders.

The groups have met for several hours in the European Parliament to discuss following key issues related to the societal impact of pain:

1. Pain as a quality indicator for health care



2. Chronic pain: a disease or symptom?



3. The relevance of pain in cancer care and rehabilitation



4. Pain, rehabilitation and reintegration of workers in the workforce



The faculty of each working group has been asked to produce specific policy recommendations addressing the societal impact of pain (SIP) to be presented in the plenary session on the following day of the symposium.



Results

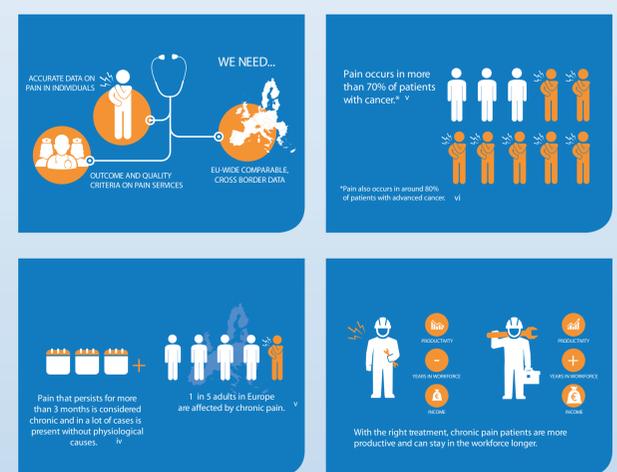
The SIP symposium was held under the high patronage of the Italian Ministry of Health and with support from more than 20 cross-party and cross-country MEPs.

About 250 participants all high-ranking experts in their field, ranging from MEP and representatives from the World Health Organisation (WHO) to officials from health insurances and advocates of patient's organisations attended.

The organizing partners formulated eight key recommendations directed to the institutions of the European Union and national governments:

1. Implementation of article 8.5 of the Cross-border Healthcare Directive
2. Establish an EU platform on the societal impact of pain
3. Integrate chronic pain within EU policies on chronic diseases
4. Ensure that pain care is a part of policies and strategies on cancer
5. Initiate policies addressing the impact of pain on employment
6. Implement workplace adjustments for people with chronic pain
7. Increase investment in pain research
8. Prioritise pain within education for healthcare professionals, patients and the general public

The high number of more than 300 endorsing organisations since the start of the SIP platform demonstrates the great interest and support from the different stakeholder groups in Europe.



Grobe, et al., 2016; Brevik, et al., 2006

Conclusions and Outlook

The policy recommendations created at the SIP symposium 2016 form a comprehensive base for further policy development for the management of the societal impact of pain.

In the coming months the partners of the SIP platform will continue to raise the SIP 2016 recommendations with policy-makers and influential stakeholder.

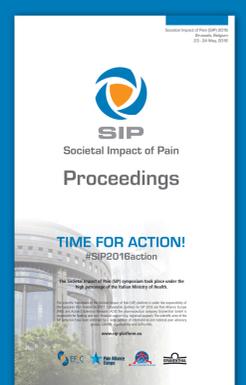
At European level representatives of the SIP platform will speak with the European Institutions addressing the "SIP policy recommendations".

At national level the SIP platform will support discussions along the lines of SIP roadmap of action from 2011.

In June 2017, the SIP partner will reconvene in Malta under the auspices of the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Since its start in 2009, SIP has received increasing interest from politicians and other decision makers and is seen as a role model for other multi-stakeholder platforms addressing healthcare issues.

The SIP 2016 proceedings can be found under <https://www.sip-platform.eu>



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