

GA²LEN UCARE Network Launches World Urticaria Day Campaign

The campaign highlights the need to have universal access to care for people with urticaria

Berlin, 14 September 2023 – The GA²LEN Urticaria Centers of Reference and Excellence Network (GA²LEN UCARE Network) has launched its 2023 awareness campaign for World Urticaria Day (UDAY). UDAY takes place on October 1st each year and aims to increase global awareness of urticaria, also known as hives, and empower those affected by it to understand their disease better.

The theme for UDAY 2023 is **Access to Care**, which has been selected to highlight the impact that urticaria can have on the lives of people who are affected by it. Urticaria affects all aspects of life and flare-ups can cause strain on relationships, negatively impact work, and compromise many other parts of a person's life.

This year's campaign aims to raise awareness of urticaria as a common condition and promote a better understanding of the challenges facing those affected. **Care** should be universal and accessible to all. People living with Urticaria find it incredibly challenging, especially with the impact it has on their everyday life.

The **care** offered to patients should be timely and appropriate – this key message emphasizes the importance that every person deserves access to prompt medical attention, accurate diagnoses, and tailored treatment plans to help alleviate symptoms and enhance the quality of life.

Care should also consider everything - this includes mental health and comorbidities. This message puts importance on addressing the mental health aspects and considering the comorbidities alongside the management of Urticaria.

It is also important to have **care** that is affordable and that includes support from local patient group. Living with Urticaria can be a financial burden, but access to care is a fundamental right. **Care** should also include patient groups, as they play an important role to those struggling with Urticaria.

A series of videos featuring people affected by urticaria and explaining the impact on their lives can be found on the website (<https://urticariaday.org/>) with valuable educational materials, and social media posts to promote the campaign leading up to UDAY.

Prof. Dr. Marcus Maurer, globally recognized urticariologist and Managing Director of the Institute of Allergology IFA at Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin explained "Whilst care for urticaria is improving all the time, the access to the same level of care is not the same everywhere. We want to strive to ensure that availability of information about the condition and affordability of care are improving for everyone, no matter where they are. Local organisations are key to helping patients achieve this."

The campaign recommends that members of the public join local UDAY awareness events that are being organized by advocacy groups and GA²LEN UCARE centers worldwide. Details will be posted in the events section at <https://urticariaday.org/>.

About urticaria

Urticaria is a disease characterized by the sudden development of itchy pale red bumps on the skin. These bumps (or wheals) can present in a variety of shapes and sizes and are often the result of an allergic reaction or infection.

One in four people is affected by urticaria at some point in their lives. In most cases, it heals within a few weeks (acute urticaria), but in about one percent of the world population, the symptoms last longer and the disease becomes chronic.

While urticaria can be physically debilitating and hard to treat, it is not just a physical disease and much of the impact on quality of life is related to mental health. It can cause significant distress or embarrassment for those affected and many people feel stigmatized.

UDAY 2023 is organized by the UCARE Network and Urticaria Network e.V. (UNEV) and is kindly supported among others by Novartis Pharmaceuticals.

About the GA²LEN UCARE Network

The GA²LEN Urticaria Centers of Reference and Excellence Network (GA²LEN UCARE Network) is the biggest and most active global consortium of urticariologists and urticaria centers with the common goal to improve the treatment of urticaria. It was established by the Global Allergy and Asthma European Network (GA²LEN), a consortium of leading European research centres specialized in allergic diseases, as part of a programme to support the development, interaction, and accreditation of centers of reference and excellence in special areas of allergy.

As of today, the GA²LEN UCARE network comprises of 164 centers in 45 countries. The focus of UCARE is on common diagnostic and treatment guidelines, research, education, and training activities for physicians and patients, but also on raising public awareness of urticaria. More information is available at www.ga2len-ucare.com.

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