

Actions by IASP Members, Chapters, and SIGs Reduce Suffering: An Update on the 2019 Global Year Against Pain in the Most Vulnerable Campaign

By Lars Arendt-Nielsen, Dr. Med., PhD (Denmark) IASP President



When IASP and I launched the 2019 Global Year Against Pain in the Most Vulnerable in January, I shared my urgent desire to accelerate responses that would vastly improve the assessment and treatment of pain in children, older adults, individuals with psychiatric and learning disorders, and survivors of war and torture. So much needless suffering could be alleviated if only the right clinical approaches were applied, the right policies adopted, and the right partners engaged, including patient advocacy organizations.

I wasn't sure what to expect from our call to action, but now, as we enter the final third of our annual campaign, I can say with pride and gratitude that I am deeply impressed with the worldwide outpouring of support and creative activity achieved by IASP members, chapters, and Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Thank you all—and keep going!

Let me share just a few accomplishments of the pain community to date and then preview other Global Year events and resources happening before the end of the year. You still have many opportunities to get involved.

To start, IASP SIGs most closely related to the four targeted vulnerable populations—[Pain in Childhood](#); [Pain in Older Persons](#); [Pain Related to Torture, Organized Violence, and War](#); and [Pain And Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#)—have been providing excellent leadership and continuing education. The Pain in Childhood SIG, for example, hosted the [12th International Symposium on Pediatric Pain](#) 16-20 June in Basel, Switzerland, uniting a multidisciplinary audience eager to reduce pain in babies and children.

Other SIGs—including those devoted to Neuropathic Pain and Abdominal and Pelvic Pain—have held related professional development sessions at their respective [7th International Congress on Neuropathic Pain](#) (NeuPSIG 2019) and [4th World Congress on Abdominal and Pelvic Pain](#), both in London in May.

Chapters have also activated their members and networks. A wonderful example is the *Drawings of My Pain* ebook, produced by The Portuguese Association for the Study of Pain, which showcases entries from an art competition for pediatric pain patients along with information about pediatric pain.

I want to give special thanks to all of the chapter volunteers who helped translate 13 peer-reviewed [fact sheets into 16 languages](#) to date. These free, downloadable resources offer easy access to any clinician and researcher interested in better assessing, treating, and understanding vulnerable patients in pain. Additional resources can be found in the ever-growing list of articles related to the Global Year theme in [PAIN](#) and [PAIN Reports](#).

I also invite you to join in on our webinar series. You can listen to the recorded [Pain in Children webinar](#) from 25 February and [register](#) for the next free Global Year webinar, [Pain in Dementia](#),

24 September at 11 a.m. Eastern Time. Thanks to these generous speakers, hundreds of pain experts and trainees have participated in these exceptional e-learning opportunities.

For more peer-to-peer discussion, you can still attend several major events. The Acute Pain SIG is supporting the Global Year via a [Pain After Surgery in Vulnerable Patients Symposium](#) on 3 September in Valencia, Spain. Immediately following, from 4-7 September, is the [10th Conference of the European Pain Federation \(EFIC\)](#), also in Valencia, Spain, and organized under the leadership of President Bart Morlion.

You can see why I am so proud that pain experts, trainees and patients around the globe have found so many ways to support this campaign. Visit the [Global Year Against Pain in the Most Vulnerable website](#) for more news and resources, and follow our progress on social media via the Twitter hashtag #GYPainVulnerable.

I have, during the campaign, visited many countries and presented data on the lack of proper pain management in the vulnerable groups. I'm happy to say that volunteers from our IASP community have taken the lead to develop pain management guidelines in countries where those did not exist for specific vulnerable groups. There is still time to join our efforts to transform the quality of millions of lives! Your influence and expertise really can make a difference. Thank you!