



2020 GLOBAL YEAR FOR THE PREVENTION OF PAIN



We, Brona Fullen (EFIC), and Esther Pogatzki-Zahn (IASP), are very honored to co-chair the Global Year for the Prevention of Pain. Throughout this global year, we will disseminate pain prevention strategies to researchers, clinicians, multidisciplinary healthcare professionals and patients worldwide.

Our goal is to give an overview about preventive strategies that are able to

- protect against the onset of pain (primary prevention)
- prevent pain from becoming chronic or recurring (secondary prevention)
- reduce the long-term consequences of pain (tertiary prevention)

In addition, we would like to raise awareness that preventing pain and its consequences is at least as important as treating pain—an area that requires further attention.

Pain is a major burden of disease, and it is suggested that the burden might even increase in the near future. Preventing pain at any stage may reduce the burden before it occurs (or gets worse in the case of secondary and tertiary prevention). This is of major importance in the pain field because, as we already know, once established (chronic) pain is very difficult to treat. However, the idea of prevention in the pain field is hampered by a number of factors. Firstly, preventive strategies are difficult to integrate in many healthcare systems where pain treatment strategies are reimbursed but those aimed at pain prevention are not. Secondly, while preventative strategies for many other chronic diseases are well researched and integrated into health services, preventative strategies for pain frequently are not. Early identification of ‘at-risk’ patients is needed and appropriate treatment offered. Finally, less research is being undertaken in various aspects of ‘pain prevention’ than in other pain-related fields. Despite this, the 2020 Global Year aims to share the current evidence and ideas surrounding why prevention is important and how (and which) preventive strategies should be utilized by health care professional for their patients.

The Global Year Task Force has prepared a number of fact sheets summarizing what is currently known about primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, including focusing on pain prevention for certain conditions (postoperative and low back pain), and populations (vulnerable patients among others), as well as the role of physical activity, medication and nutrition. We will also produce webinars throughout the year that will be advertised on the webpage and via the newsletter, and identify prevention-related articles in *PAIN* and *PAIN Reports*. The 2020 IASP World Congress on Pain, taking place from 4-8 August 2020 in Amsterdam will have a number of prevention-related workshops and events. One major event will be the Satellite Symposium “[Preventing Chronification of Acute Pain and its Consequences](#)” on 4 August 2020. We hope you will join us for this event as well as the rest of the Congress.

Finally, IASP and EFIC would like to emphasize that we are aware of the gaps in knowledge within the field of pain prevention. Further research is needed in examining preventive mechanisms, risk factors and risk assessment tools, preventive therapy approaches and responders at every level in order to successfully prevent pain in the future. Can you help address these limitations?