

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

World Gynecologic Oncology Awareness Day (World GO Day).

Erase stigma in women's cancers: join the 6th #WorldGODay on September 20!

XX, XY XX, 2024 – **More than 100 awareness activities are forecast around the world this September 20, with a shared goal of combatting stigma surrounding women's cancers.** Patient advocacy groups, scientific societies, cancer patients and caregivers will join together this year for the sixth time in observance of World Gynecologic Oncology Day.

This year's campaign introduces a new visual identity and a new website for the awareness day (worldgoday.org) and shines light on an often neglected topic which deeply impacts on the life of women with gyn cancers: stigma.

Each year, more than 1 million women globally are diagnosed with a gynecologic cancer, a set of cancers originating in the reproductive organs that includes ovarian cancer, uterine/endometrial/womb cancer, cervical cancer, vaginal cancer, and vulvar cancer as well as rare cancer types. However, due to the tumor location and nature of the symptoms and treatments of these cancers, gynecologic cancer patients can run up against societal stigmas.

Stigma is something all cancer patients may face sooner or later, but it may be more frequently endured by gyn cancer patients, due to societal and cultural factors including misogyny or ageism or taboo about discussing reproductive organs.

Even "light" stigma about talking about the body are a barrier to education and cancer symptom awareness. For example, a reluctance to discuss menstruation can lead to symptoms of endometrial cancer being overlooked. Other stigma, such as misperceptions about cervical cancer, too often results in discrimination against the patients themselves.

By sharing evidence, facts and real examples at World Gynecologic Oncology Day events and online, participants will work to identify and erase the stigmas around gyn cancers. In addition to combatting stigma, World GO Day events improve awareness about gyn cancer **symptoms, risks, care, cancer prevention and screening.**

In 2023, World GO Day was observed by 80 participating organizations from 31 countries worldwide, including nations throughout Europe as well as Venezuela, Iraq, Singapore, Japan and more. World GO Day was founded in 2019 by the European Network of Gynaecological Cancer Advocacy Groups.

Hashtags:

#GOAgainstStigma
#HelpLiftTheBurden #NoStigmaInGO
#WorldGODay

Draft of quotes:

1.

It is already a stigma just to be diagnosed with gynecological cancer, let alone mention that you have cervical or vulvar cancer. We don't see enough examples of women who come forward in public with their diagnosis. The cancer and the treatment touches a lot of different areas: reproductive inability, body image, sexual health, social interactions, etc. Therefore, it is important to break down these stigmas together, to reduce the impact on the lives of women with gynecological cancers.

Kim Hulscher, Netherlands; ENGAGE Co-Chair and cervical cancer survivor

2.

World GO Day is a pivotal celebration to support patients affected by gynecological cancers and their relatives. Patients are fighters and warriors against their disease, but this special day allows them, along with physicians, researchers, pharma companies and other supporters to communicate and add awareness about these cancers. There is a special campaign also this year about the quality of life of patients and the physical, emotional or psychological stigma after they are treated and cured.

Prof. Philippe Morice, France; ENGAGE Co-Chair and gynecological oncologist at Institut Gustave Roussy

3.

This year for World GO Day on September 20, I encourage everyone to break the silence and overcome the stigma surrounding gynecological cancers. Every year more than 1 million women globally are diagnosed with a gynecological malignancy. It's time to raise awareness because early detection can save thousands of lives. As a gynecological oncologist, I strongly recommend you get informed, get screened, and empower others to do the same.

Prof. Anna Fagotti, Italy; ESGO President and gynecological oncologist at Policlinico Gemelli

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About Gynecological Cancers

With an estimated annual incidence of more than 3.6 million and mortality exceeding 1.3 million, these cancers account for nearly 40% of all cancer incidence and for more than 30% of all cancer mortality in women worldwide. Among those, approximately 44% are represented by cervical cancer, 29% by endometrial cancer, 23% by ovarian cancer and less than 5% by other gynecological cancers, i.e., vulvar and vaginal cancers. In 2020, 420,000 women worldwide died from gynecological cancers.

Some gynecological cancers can be prevented. Regular screening and examinations along with lifestyle choices can help reduce risk factors and even promote early diagnosis at a stage when treatment can be more effective, and a complete cure is possible. Although cervical cancer is mostly preventable and can be cured if diagnosed early through screenings, 7 out of 10 women avoid these examinations because of fear they might have the HPV virus.

Ovarian, endometrial, cervical, and other gynecological cancers are among the most common cancers affecting women, but public awareness of these cancers remains worryingly low. ESGO and ENGAGe believe that raising public awareness about gynecological cancer prevention will ultimately improve survival rates.

About ENGAGe

Established in 2012 by ESGO, the European Network of Gynaecological Cancer Advocacy Groups (ENGAGe) represents advocacy groups of patients affected by all types of gynecological cancers, from the rarest to the most common, in particular: ovarian, endometrial, cervical, vulvar, vaginal and other rare cancers. With over 80 groups in 28 countries, ENGAGe is Europe's largest gynecological cancer patient advocacy network.

About ESGO

ESGO is Europe's foremost gynecological cancer organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of women with gynecological cancers through prevention, research and excellence in care and education. Since its foundation in 1983, ESGO has been a growing not for-profit organization and forum of more than 2,500 professionals from over 40 countries around the world, leading the way in advancing the highest quality of care for women with gynecological cancers.

Acknowledgements

ESGO and ENGAGe gratefully acknowledge the generous support of our partners, please check out our website for the latest information.

