

For immediate release,
Monday, September 9th

Chronic Pain Ireland shines a light on chronic pain with ‘Pain to Power’ campaign for Pain Awareness Month

- **Chronic Pain Ireland today announces a programme of events, webinars and self-management courses during September to mark Pain Awareness Month**
- **Up to 1 in 3 people in Ireland have chronic pain, with 1 in 5 people living with pain for 10 years or more**
- **People with chronic pain face stigma and a lack of understanding from others including some healthcare professionals**

Chronic Pain Ireland is today launching its campaign for Pain Awareness Month 2024 with the theme ‘Pain to Power’. Pain Awareness Month is a global campaign to raise awareness of chronic pain during the month of September.

Chronic Pain is a major healthcare problem in Ireland and throughout the world. Chronic Pain Ireland will host a series of events and activities throughout September to raise awareness about the challenges faced by people living with chronic pain.

Chronic Pain Ireland is the national charity providing information and support services to people living with chronic pain. It supports those living with chronic pain and their families and works with healthcare professionals, academics, researchers and others interested in chronic pain.

The theme ‘Pain to Power’ communicates the importance for people with chronic pain to take power over their recovery journey in spite of the stigma and lack of understanding they may face. People living with chronic pain can improve quality of life by finding purpose and joining a community. They may be able to reduce the impact of their experience of pain by learning about the neuroscience of pain and finding out about the latest pain management techniques.

Some stats on Chronic Pain include:

- The University of Galway Prevalence, Impact and Cost of Chronic Pain (PRIME) study estimates up to 1 in 3 adults in Ireland experience chronic pain.
- The European Pain Federation reports there are 150 million people experiencing chronic pain in Europe, approximately equal to the population of France and Germany combined.
- The Irish Pain Society estimates that chronic pain costs the Irish economy around €4.7 billion per year, more than 2.5% of GDP.
- According to The Irish Pain Society, 42% of people living in Ireland with chronic pain think others doubt the existence of their pain even though 21% said their pain was so intense they wanted to die.

Advances in neuroscience mean we have new understandings about chronic pain. We now know that the most effective treatment options take a personalised, multidisciplinary, and multimodal approach. While patients may need access to doctors, nurses, mental health professionals, physiotherapists and occupational therapists as part of their treatment, a lack of services in Ireland means many patients remain on waiting lists for extended periods.

According to figures released by the Irish Pain Society, Ireland has just 27 dedicated pain consultants operating across the public system, meaning that 41% of patients are currently waiting more than 12 months for their first appointment with a chronic pain specialist, while 18% are waiting the same length of time for their first treatment.

Chronic Pain Ireland along with advocacy groups from around the world will raise awareness of chronic pain for the month of September using the hashtag #PainAwarenessMonth.

Chair of Chronic Pain Ireland, Martina Phelan, says:

“This September, we want to shine a light on the prevalence of chronic pain in Ireland and the challenges people living with chronic pain face. There are more than 150 conditions where chronic pain is a factor including many common conditions such as chronic back pain, headaches and migraine, joint pain and nerve pain. A lack of services in Ireland means that people languish on waiting lists while their quality of life reduces. Many people with chronic pain experience isolation and loneliness on top of the physical and emotional distress of experiencing pain.”

“We want people living with chronic pain and their loved ones to know that, with Chronic Pain Ireland, there is a community available to them where they can access pain education as well as a sense of belonging where people understand the impact of persistent pain on all aspects of a person’s life.”

Consultant in Anaesthesiology and Pain Medicine at St. Vincent’s University Hospital and Dean of the Faculty of Pain Medicine at the College of Anaesthetists of Ireland, Dr Hugh Gallagher, says:

“Chronic pain is a significant public health issue causing physical and emotional distress for sufferers and their families. Globally, chronic pain places a substantial economic burden on healthcare systems and economies. The Irish healthcare system has limited resources to manage chronic pain, with a relatively small number of chronic pain clinics and long waiting times for both assessment and treatment.”

“Chronic Pain Ireland has a vital role in providing education and support to individuals with chronic pain as well as advocating on national and international stages for recognition of the impact of pain and for better access to appropriate care for people living with pain.”

To become a member of Chronic Pain Ireland, visit www.chronicpain.ie

-----PRESS RELEASE ENDS-----

For more information or to request interviews with members of Chronic Pain Ireland living with pain contact **Chronic Pain Ireland** info@chronicpain.ie or call 01 8047567

NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT CHRONIC PAIN IRELAND (CPI)

Chronic Pain Ireland (CPI) is the national charity providing information, education and support services to people living with Chronic Pain, their families, friends, caregivers and other interested parties. CPI advocates on their behalf and works closely with all stakeholders while providing a range of supports, including self-management workshops, telephone support line, monthly e-newsletter, patient and public involvement (PPI) research partnerships, member meetings and public awareness events.

CPI receives core funding via the Scheme to Support National Organisations, which is funded by the Government of Ireland through the Department of Rural and Community Development. CPI gratefully acknowledges SSNO funding and the ongoing support of Pobal and the Department of Rural and Community Development under

the Programme and Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) 2022-2025.

Source of statistics: Irish Pain Society presentation at European Pain Federation Congress (EFIC) 2022. The Irish Pain Society, Chapter of the International Association for the Study of Pain, is a non-profit organisation comprising multidisciplinary healthcare professionals and scientists, dedicated to research, and educational and clinical aspects of pain management.

The PRIME study (The Prevalence, Impact and Cost of Chronic Non-Cancer Pain in Ireland in Adults) was conducted by the Centre for Pain Research at NUI Galway.

DEFINITION OF CHRONIC PAIN

ICD-11 defines chronic pain as an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with, or resembling that associated with, actual or potential tissue damage. Chronic pain is pain that persists for longer than 3 months. Chronic pain is multifactorial, which means biological, psychological and social factors contribute to the pain syndrome.

Source: https://europeanpainfederation.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/ICD-11-Leaflet.pdf?utm_source=SIP&utm_campaign=89e73c9d76-sip-newsletter-01-2023_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-ef038cad6b-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D