

# Living with epilepsy

STEP  
by  
STEP



Caritas Malta  
Epilepsy Association

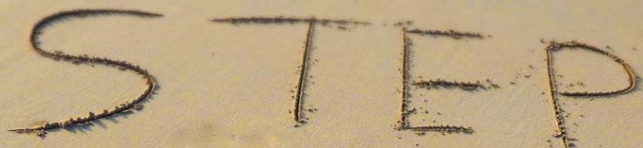


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*Tgħix bl-epilessija, pass wara pass*  
Living with epilepsy, step by step

National Epilepsy Conference,  
13 February 2016, Dolmen Resort Hotel, Malta





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Living a 'normal' life with epilepsy has been chosen to be the theme of this year's national conference of the Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association. The conference is being held in conjunction with the Department of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics of the University of Malta. The conference will highlight practical aspects of living with epilepsy, leisure time, sports and family.

There are over 4,000 persons who are currently diagnosed with epilepsy, living in Malta and Gozo. Epilepsy is often a hidden medical condition which requires several diverse medical and support services and it can greatly affect a person's social and personal life. We are honoured that the conference will be opened by HE The President of Malta, Ms Marie Louise Coleiro Preca and Mr Leonid McKay, Director of Caritas Malta and closed by Hon Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Dr Chris Fearne. Among the invited speakers will be Prof Giuseppe Capovilla, Italy and Ms Sue Mitchell, UK.


We are also pleased to host several distinguished local speakers including Dr Stephen Attard, Dr Anna Micallef and Ms Trudy Kerr, a well-known TV personality in Malta, who will be sharing their personal experiences with us. All delegates will be invited to participate in interactive workshops, which will serve as a forum for exchange of ideas. This conference will be of specific interest to persons with epilepsy and their families, educators, teachers and LSAs and various health care professionals and students (doctors, pharmacists, nurses etc) and all those who work with persons with epilepsy. We are sure that this conference will be of great interest to all the participants and the interactive sessions will stimulate a great deal of discussion.



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### THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

*Caroline Attard, Matthew Attard, Manuel Camilleri, Mario Dimech, Victoria Dimech,  
Frank Portelli, Janet Mifsud, Adriana Soler, Zvetlana Zerafa*



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National Epilepsy Conference,  
13 February 2016, Dolmen Resort Hotel, Malta

- 08.30      **Registration and Welcome Coffee**
- 09.00      **Opening of Conference**  
Chair Mr Frank Portelli, President, Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association
- Welcome Remarks**  
HE Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta  
Mr Leonid McKay, Director, Caritas Malta
- 09.30      **Plenary Talks**  
Chair Ms Victoria Dimech, Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association
- 09.35      **Physical activity, sport and epilepsy**  
Prof Giuseppe Capovilla, President, Italian League Against Epilepsy
- 09.55      **Practical advice for persons with epilepsy and their families**  
Ms Sue Mitchell, Epilepsy Action UK
- 10.20      **Questions**
- 10.30      **Coffee break**



- 11.00      **Living with epilepsy: How can research help?**  
Prof Janet Mifsud, University of Malta  
Prof. Giuseppe Di Giovanni, Coordinator Malta Neuroscience Network
- 11.15      **Living with epilepsy in Malta: Interactive session**  
**Moderator:** Ms Leontine Spiteri  
**Panel:** Dr Anna Micallef, Ms Trudy Kerr, Dr Stephen Attard
- 12.00      **Discussion and questions**
- 12.30      **Lunch**
- 14.00      **Interactive workshops**
- A      Living with epilepsy: sports and leisure time**  
         Prof G. Capovilla, Ms Trudy Kerr
- B      Living with medicines for epilepsy**  
         Dr Stephen Attard, Dr Anna Micallef
- C      Living with epilepsy: the family**  
         Ms Sue Mitchell, Dr Doriette Soler
- 15.30      **Reports from workshops**  
         Prof Janet Mifsud
- 15.45      **Closing**  
         Parliamentary Secretary for Health Hon Dr Chris Fearnhe

## Physical activity, sport and epilepsy

Prof Giuseppe Capovilla,  
President,  
Italian League Against Epilepsy



People with epilepsy (PWEs) are often advised against participating in sports and exercise, mostly because of fear, overprotection, and lack of knowledge about the specific risks associated with such activities. On the contrary, available scientific evidence suggests that physical exercise and active participation in sports can have a beneficial influence on seizure frequency and severity and, in addition, they produce broader long-term health and psychosocial benefits.

Recently, the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) Task Force on Sports and Epilepsy published in a consensus paper prepared to offer general guidance concerning participation of PWEs in sport activities, in the journal *Epilepsia*.

This talk provides suggestions for clinical advice and for the issuance of certificates of fitness for sports based on presumed risk for different categories of sports as well as epileptic clinical conditions, in order to maximally allow PWEs to practice and compete in sports without compromising their safety and that of others. In view of the lack of well-controlled studies and the paucity of observational data, recommendations are opinion based, utilizing as a primary reference the EU driving regulations.

Prof Capovilla is the Chair of the Department of Child Neuropsychiatry and the Epilepsy Center, C. Poma Hospital, Mantova. He was Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Italian League Against Epilepsy from 2008 to 2014 and is presently President of the Italian League Against Epilepsy. He is an expert for antiepileptic drugs of the Italian Medicine Agency (AIFA) and European Medicine Agency (EMA) and a member of the Committee for Orphan Medicinal Products (COMP) of EMA. Prof Capovilla is the Chair for the Task Force on Sport and Epilepsy of the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE).

## Practical advice for persons with epilepsy and their families

Ms Sue Mitchell,  
Communications Co-ordinator  
Epilepsy Action UK



Living with epilepsy presents different challenges to every person with the condition and to their families. It can feel hard to achieve the day-to-day life that so many others seem to take for granted.

Thankfully treatment for epilepsy is improving. Alongside this, epilepsy is no longer seen as a condition that automatically limits life. How can we take that and turn it into something real, for real people? How can we make sure that children get the best from their education? How can we open up the best employment opportunities? How do we tackle stigma, and deal with not being able to do some things?

Sue will look at some of the very practical steps that have proved useful to Epilepsy Action members.

Sue has worked for Epilepsy Action for 20 years and is responsible for the charity's website, publications, public relations and campaigns. As a writer, Sue is particularly keen to promote quality in health information. Epilepsy Action is run by its members and represents the voice of people with epilepsy in the UK.



# Living with epilepsy

[www.caritasmalta.org/epilepsy](http://www.caritasmalta.org/epilepsy)

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The organisers would like to acknowledge the kind support of:

