

Palazzo Ferreria

lit up in purple for
International Epilepsy Day -
Monday, 8th February 2021



photo by Noel Portelli

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Affiliated to



Caritas
Malta
Epilepsy
Association

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NEXT MEMBERS' MEETING

Sessions will be held on zoom until further notice and start at 6pm.

Send an email to maltaepilepsy@gmail.com and you will receive the login details accordingly.



SAVE THESE DATES

14 MAY 2021

09 JUL 2021

10 SEP 2021

12 NOV 2021

Membri tal-Kumitat 2021

President
Mr. Frank Portelli

Viċi President
Dr. Anna Micallef

Segretarja
Ms. Claudine Aitken

Teżoriera
Ms. Caroline Attard

P.R.
Ms. Robin Pinkston

Assistent P.R.
Mr. Matthew Attard

Facebook u Żagħżagħ
Ms. Adriana Caruana Soler

Membru
Mr. Manuel Camilleri

Konsulenta
Prof. Janet Mifsud

Psychotherapist:
Verena Portelli



Gheziez membri ,

L-ewwelnett nispera li koll tinsabu tajbin u nerġa nappellalkom sabiex isseġwu l-istruzzjonijiet u d-direttivi tal-ministeru tas-saħħa. Nisperaw u nittamaw li l-affarijiet imorru aħjar issa li waslet it-tliqima.

Ma nistax ma niftaħx din l-introduzzjoni u ma nsemmix il-Jum Internazzjonali tal-Epilessija. Dan l-avveniment isehh kull sena fit-tieni tnejn ta' Frar u dan jigi ċelebrat f'din id-data mhux b'kombinazzjoni izda ghax tkun viċin il-jum ta' San Valentinu. San Valentinu huwa l-qaddis patrún tal-epilessija. Jgħidu li San Valentinu kien fejjaq xi nies minn din il-kundizzjoni.

L-attivitajiet għal din il-ġurnata bdew minn diversi jiem qabel. Dawn l-attivitajiet saru possibbli bil-ġajjnuna tal-Università tal-Malta u l-Uffiċċju tal-Komunikazzjoni bdew ix-xogħol minn 15 il-ġurnata qabel, u nista' ngħid mingħajr tlaqqliq li x-xogħol li għamlu kien verament professjonali.

Malta ħadet sehem attiv fl-inizjattiva globali tal-Jum Internazzjonali tal-Epilessija, fit-8 ta' Frar 2021. Ir-rwol tas-CMEA fil-kampanja globali "Raġġ ta' dawl għall-epilessija!", kellha tenfasizza d-diffikultajiet varji ffaċċjati minn persuni bl-epilessija, kemm f'Malta kif ukoll mad-dinja kollha.

Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association ingħaqdet mal-Università ta' Malta biex iżżid l-għarfien u b'hekk tnaqqas l-istigma. L-għanijiet ta' din il-kampanja kienu tnejn. L-ewwel nett kellha l-għan li tagħti mportanza l-ħajja ta' persuni bl-epilessija u l-familjari tagħhom. It-tieni, nagħtu prominenza wkoll fuq it-tfassil ta' attivitajiet permezz tar-rwol edukattiv u ta' riċerka li twettaq l-Università ta' Malta fil-qasam tal-epilessija, u l-kollaborazzjoni mal-Caritas Malta u l-Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association f'dan ir-rigward.

L-Università organizzat kampanja ta' għarfien pubbliku fuq il-midja fuq perijodu ta' ġimgħtejn fuq Facebook, Instagram, Campus FM u fuq il-websajt tagħha. Permezz ta' din is-sħubija b'saħħitha li ilha għall-żmien twil, CMEA għet mistiedna għal diversi programmi tat-TV u tar-radju kemm fuq stazzjonijiet pubbliċi kif ukoll privati. Il-kampanja nidiet 2 vidjows iffilmjati, prodotti u editjati b'mod espert mit-tim tal-Midja tal-Università ta' Malta.

Kien hemm bosta artikli ppubblikati fuq gazzetti lokali. Fost dawn kien hemm editorjal iddedikat għall-Epilessija u x-xogħol magħmul mis-CMEA, artiklu miktub mill-Prof. Janet Mifsud, it-tielet wieħed mill-Prof. Janet Mifsud u Claudine Marika Aitken bħala ko-awturi u artiklu mill-Ministru għall-Inkluzjoni u l-Kwalità tal-ħajja.

L-attivitajiet laħqu l-qofol tagħhom bil-Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association tingħaqad, għall-ewwel darba, mal-inizjattiva globali bid-dawl vjola fuq 8 jiem binjiet Maltin; Berġa ta' Kastilja, Palazzo Castellania, Palazzo Ferreria, Cavalier House u Maison Demandols fis-6, is-7 u t-8 ta' Frar. Dan sar possibbli permezz tal-appoġġ tal-Uffiċċju tal-Prim Ministru, l-Uffiċċju tad-Deputat Prim Ministru u l-Ministeru għas-Saħħa, il-Ministeru għall-Gustizzja Soċjali u Solidarjetà, il-Familja u d-Drittijiet tat-Tfal, il-Ministeru għall-Inkluzjoni u l-Kwalità tal-ħajja u il-Ministeru għall-Finanzi u l-Impjiegi, rispettivament. Xi kunsilli lokali ppubblikaw posters "Raġġ ta' dawl għall-epilessija!" u informazzjoni fuq il-websajts tagħhom jew il-paġni tal-Facebook u mill-inqas kunsill lokali wieħed ingħaqad mal-inizjattiva. Pereżempju, il-Kunsill Lokali ta' Pembroke xegħel funtana. Is-sit verament popolari 'People of Malta' wkoll tagħtna daqqa' t'id f'din il-ġurnata billi ppubblikat artiklu verament intersanti ta' membru tal-kumitat tagħna, Manuel Camilleri, li f'dan l-artiklu semma' wkoll li dik il-ġurnata kienet il-jum internazzjonali tal-epilessija. Manuel semma' wkoll s-siti kollha fil-belt li nxtegħlu vjola.

Il-kampanja nidiet is-sit Instagram tal-Assoċjazzjoni. CMEA innutat zieda ta' "likes u views" fuq il-midja soċjali ta' Facebook tagħha. Numru ta' persuni kkuntattjaw lill-Assoċjazzjoni għal aktar informazzjoni u appoġġ u b'mod ġenerali kienet kampanja eċċellenti.

CMEA hija herqana biex tipparteċipa mill-ġdid fil-kampanja tas-sena d-dieħla u tittama li jissieħbu aktar entitajiet. Dan kollu kien possibbli għax ħdimna bħala tim wieħed, u jien ninsab kburi li niffirma parti minn dan it-tim.

Frank



GERD ALTMANN/PIXABAY

A Free Webinar by Zoom moderated by Dr. Anna Micallef

To join send an email to
maltaepilepsy@gmail.com
and you will receive the login details.



Dr. Anna Micallef is a general practitioner. She graduated from the University of Malta in 2015 and spent two years working at Mater Dei Hospital. She then started the training program for Specialists in Family Medicine which she has just completed. During the members' meeting on the 12th of March Dr. Micallef will talk about "When Sparks Fly". A general overview of epilepsy from the medical point of view will be given. Epilepsy and the different types of seizures will be explained in very simple terms. The session will of course be an interactive one and questions will be addressed.

It-tabiba Anna Micallef hija tabiba tal-familja. Hija gradwat mill-Università ta' Malta fl-2015 u għamlet sentejn taħdem fl-Isptar Mater Dei. Wara bdiet il-programm ta' taħriġ għall-Ispeċjalisti fil-Medicina tal-Familja li għadha kemm temmet. Waqt il-laqgħa tal-membri fit-12 ta' Marzu it-tabiba Micallef se titkellem dwar "When Sparks Fly". Hi beħsiebha titkellem fuq l-epilessija mill-aspett mediku. L-epilessija u t-tipi differenti ta' aċċessjonijiet se jiġu spjegati f'termini sempliċi ħafna. Is-sessjoni naturalment tkun waħda interattiva u l-mistoqsijiet jiġu indirizzati.

IMPORTANT NOTICE



IBE and ILAE Joint Statement on COVID-19 vaccines and people with epilepsy

Vaccines against COVID19 are currently being approved and becoming available.

There is currently no evidence to suggest that having epilepsy is specifically associated with a higher risk of side effects from a COVID-19 vaccine. For people with epilepsy, the risk of COVID-19 infection and potential complications far outweighs the risk of side effects from a COVID-19 vaccine. As with other vaccines however, a fever can develop after a COVID-19 vaccination. This could lower the seizure threshold in some people. Antipyretics (e.g. paracetamol/acetaminophen) taken regularly for 48 hours after the vaccination (or for the duration of fever) will minimize this risk.

Before you receive a COVID-19 vaccine, make sure to let your vaccination provider know that you have epilepsy, as well as any other important medical information, such as:

- Allergies, especially an allergy to any ingredient in the vaccine
- Allergic reactions to prior vaccines (e.g. flu vaccine)
- Current or recent fever or infection
- All medications you are taking, especially medications that suppress the immune system (e.g. immunomodulatory or immunosuppressive medicines) or anticoagulants.
- If you are pregnant or nursing, or plan to become pregnant

As with any vaccine, you should not receive the COVID-19 vaccine if you are allergic to any of its ingredients. You should not receive a second dose if you had an allergic reaction to the first dose.

If you already received the COVID-19 vaccine, it is important to continue wearing a mask and social distance. The current vaccines reduce your risk of getting sick from COVID-19 by up to 90%, depending on the vaccine, but vaccinated people may still be able to spread COVID-19 to others without knowing they are carrying it.

IBE-epilepsy.org

ILAE.org

A large graphic with the text "COVID-19" in a white, bold, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a blue, spiky virus particle with red dots at the tips of its spikes. The background is a solid teal color.

CMEA Activities for International Epilepsy Day 2021

TV, Radio, Press and Social Media Events related to International Epilepsy Day

	Date	Event	Details
1.	20 January to 8 February 2021	Numerous University of Malta - activities on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube videos	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXR73X1PNOY&t=8s ; https://www.facebook.com/Epilepsy.malta.association/videos/459837115023658 ; https://www.facebook.com/universityofmalta/photos/pcb.3956798020999586/3956797860999602/
2.	15 January 2021 and 10 February 2021	Interviews on One TV News	One TV
3.	27 January 2021	Meeting with Minister Julia Farrugia Portelli	Minister for Inclusion and Social Wellbeing
4.	2 February 2021 and 8 February 2021	Interview on Kikkra Te	Net TV
5.	4 February 2021	Interview on Telefonata l'Bogħod	Net Radio
6.	4 February 2021	Interview on Illum ma' Steph	TVM
7.	5 February 2021	Interview on Campus FM Breakfast	University Campus FM
8.	6 to 8 February 2021	Lighting in purple of five Maltese buildings in Valletta: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auberge de Castille, Office of Prime Minister Palazzo Castellania, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry for Health Palazzo Ferreria, Ministry for Social Justice and Solidarity, the Family and Children's Rights Cavalier House, Ministry for the Inclusion and Social Wellbeing Maison Demandols, Ministry for Finance and Employment 	
9.	8 February 2021	Interview with FB page: <i>People of Malta</i> which has over 80,000 followers	https://www.facebook.com/thepeopleofmalta/posts/3198784666889669
10.	8 February 2021	Let's shine a light on epilepsy	Article on Times of Malta newspaper
11.	8 February 2021	#EpilepsyDay 2021: shining a light for more understanding and awareness	Article on The Malta Independent newspaper
12.	8 February 2021	Interview on TVAM	TVM
13.	8 February 2021	Interview on Espresso	One TV
14.	8 February 2021	Interview on Popolin TV	TVM
15.	16 February 2021	Interview on Newsline with Joe Dimech	Radio Malta 93.7FM

In-Nazzjon

It-Tnejn, 8 ta' Frar, 2021

EDITORJAL U ITTRI LILL-EDITOR

Raġġ ta' dawl għall-epilessija

Jekk illum – u fil-jumejn li għaddew – ma' nżul ix-xemx tinnota l-binjiet pubbliċi ewlenin tal-Belt Valletta u postijiet oħra dominati mill-kulur vjola taħsibx li din kumbinazzjoni minghajr tifsira. Illum it-Tnejn id-dinja kollha, inkluż Malta, tfakkar il-Jum Internazzjonali tal-Epilessija, li hi wahda mill-kundizzjonijiet newroloġiċi kroniċi u prevalenti li taffettwa persuni irrispettivament mill-istatus soċjali, is-sess u l-età tagħhom.

Kundizzjoni li għadha ġgħorr stigma

Hu magħruf li l-epilessija – skont l-Organizzazzjoni Dinjija tas-Saħha – taffettwa fit inqas minn wieħed fil-mija tal-popolazzjoni tad-dinja, jiġifieri madwar 50 miljun persuna. Iffisser ukoll li f'Malta jbatu minn din il-kundizzjoni madwar 4,000 persuna. Propriu minhabba l-fatt li din hi kundizzjoni meqjusa bħala 'mohbija', jista' jkollha effetti negativi fuq il-hajja ta' dawk milquta u ta' dawk l-aktar qrib tagħhom.

Sfortunatament l-epilessija hi wahda minn dawk il-kundizzjonijiet li, kellna kemm kellna edukazzjoni u għarfin dwarhom, għadhom iġorru magħhom certa stigma. Sitwazzjoni li żżid mat-tbatijiet li jgħaddu minnhom dawk milquta.

Kontribut siewi mill-Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association

F'dan is-sens ma nistgħux ma nirrikonoxxu l-kontribut kbir ta' organizzazzjonijiet bħal Caritas Malta li fi dhanha, sa mill-1996, waqfiet organizzazzjoni volontarja – il-Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association – propriu biex tiġieled din l-istigma u tgħin mill-ahjar li tista' lill-persuni involuti u anki lil dawk qribhom. Il-viżjoni tal-assocjazzjoni fil-fatt hi 'Hajja aħjar għal nies bl-epilessija' u l-assocjazzjoni ġiet registrata bħala organizzazzjoni volontarja mhux governattiva fl-2017. L-għanijiet tagħha jinkludu li jżied l-għarfin ta' din il-kundizzjoni f'Malta, li ttejjeb il-kura tas-saħha għal persuni bl-epilessija, u li toffri appoġġ prattiku lil persuni bl-epilessija f'kull bżonn li jista' jkollhom. F'dan ir-rigward, is-CMEA hi involuta hafna fil-kisba ta' dan billi tuża l-istrategiji li ġejjin:

- **Edukazzjoni u tahrig:** tipprovi tahrig lil bosta entitajiet: bħal edukaturi, LSEs u skejċel, Agenzija Sapport, ufficiali tal-Pulizija, haddiema soċjali u professjonisti tal-kura tas-saħha li jgħaddu f'diversi setturi.

- **Lobbying u komunikazzjoni:** fuq il-midja, b'diversi partijiet interessati biex tiġi żgurata kwalità ta' hajja aħjar u l-provvediment ta' kura tas-saħha u servizzi soċjali aħjar għall-persuni kollha bl-epilessija u l-carers u l-familji tagħhom.

Dawl vjola għal aktar interess u għarfin

Din is-sena l-Jum Internazzjonali tal-Epilessija 2021 – imfakkar illum it-Tnejn – qed jara numru ta' postijiet familjari u bini famużi madwar id-dinja bħall-Kolossew f'Ruma u t-Torri Eiffel f'Parigi jingħegħu vjola biex jimmarkaw il-ġumata. Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association ingħaqdet ma' din l-inizjattiva globali bid-dawl vjola fuq binjiet kbar u famużi Maltin. L-assocjazzjoni ngħaqdet ukoll mal-Università ta' Malta biex iżżid l-għarfin dwar l-epilessija. L-Università fil-fatt qed torganizza kampanja ta' għarfin pubbliku biex tenfisizza l-hajja ta' persuni bl-epilessija u l-mahbubin tagħhom. Din il-kampanja se sservi wkoll bħala għodda edukattiva bil-għan li tnaqqas l-istigma.

Bogħod mill-preġudizzjoni li ġgħib l-istigma

Id-dawl vjola ta' dawn il-jiem fuq il-binjiet tagħna jwasssilna messaġġ biex ninformaw ruħna aktar dwar kundizzjonijiet invizibbli bħall-epilessija. Għax meta ninformaw ruħna, inkunu f'qagħda li ngħinu aktar lil min għadde minn din il-kundizzjoni. Ngħinuohom jgħixu hajja aħjar. Bogħod mill-preġudizzji tal-mishuta stigma, li għax ma tagħmilx sens, ma twassal imkien.



International Epilepsy Day

In-Nazzjon

It-Tnejn, 8 ta' Frar, 2021

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Illum jitfakkar Jum l-Epilessija

Illum it-Tnejn Malta tingħaqad mal-kumplament tad-dinja biex tfakkar il-Jum Internazzjonali tal-Epilessija.

L-Epilessija hi wahda mill-aktar kundizzjonijiet newroloġiċi kroniċi u prevalenti li taffettwa persuni irrispettivament mill-istatus soċjali, is-sess u l-età tagħhom. Hu smat li f'Malta hawn 4,000 persuna li għandhom din il-kundizzjoni.

Biex jiġi mfakkar dan il-jum diversi binjiet fil-Belt Valletta xegħlu l-faċċata tagħhom bil-kulur vjola fosthom il-Berġa ta' Kastilja, Palazzo Castellania u Palazzo Ferreria fil-Belt Valletta. Dan sar fuq inizjattiva tal-Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association.

Ara wkoll l-editorjal f'paġna 7 u storja umana f'paġna 16

Miġjuba bil-permess ta' In-Nazzjon



Lagħa virtwali mall-Ministru Julia Farrugia



Funtana ġo Pembroke mixgħula vjola għall din l-okkazzjoni mill-Kunsill Lokali ta' Pembroke

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The Malta Independent | Monday 8 February 2021

Opinion

Epilepsy Day 2021: shining a light for more understanding and awareness



**JANET MIFSUD and
CLAUDINE MARIKA AITKEN**

Most of us were transfixed in front of our television and mobile devices a few weeks ago, watching the inauguration of Joe Biden as President. Few may have paid attention to the person leading the oath which Biden repeated. That was John Roberts, US Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. A hugely important position. Yet, Roberts has also publicly stated that he has one of the most misunderstood medical conditions: epilepsy.

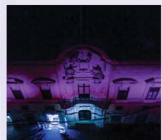
Epilepsy is the most prevalent chronic neurological disorder with an incidence of approximately 1% of the population worldwide; that is around 50 million people, with approximately 4000 persons in Malta across all ages. Epilepsy is currently defined as a tendency to have recurrent seizures (sometimes called fits). A seizure is caused when the brain activity and messaging between brain cells (neurones) becomes abnormal, leading to mixed messages being sent to various parts of the body. These appear as seizures or periods of unusual behaviour, sensations, and at times loss of awareness.

The International League Against Epilepsy classifies epilepsy in over forty different types and conditions. Epilepsy is classified "generalised" when the discharge affects the entire brain cortex. The main seizure types in this group are tonic-clonic (grand mal) and absence (petit mal). An epilepsy is called "focal" (can also be referred to as "partial") when the electrical discharge causing it occurs in a specific area of the brain. Simple partial seizures result in no loss of consciousness. On the other hand, complex partial seizures are characterised by automatisms. There are various possible aetiologies for seizures and epilepsy across various ages: prenatal or birth injury, or congenital disorders, CNS infection or trauma, head trauma, stroke, brain tumour, and neurodegenerative conditions.

According to the World Health Organization, 70% of persons with epilepsy is still seizure-free life if treated properly. Current anti-epileptic medication can control seizures in about 70% of individuals. In Europe, it is estimated that there are 10 million persons with epilepsy, 30% of whom are refractory to the drug treatment presently available and have one or more seizures per month.

Despite these medical advances which have resulted in 70% of persons with epilepsy being seizure free, epilepsy is still surrounded by huge social burdens, misconceptions and is very rarely discussed in public. In Malta, it is a condition with is unfortunately still associated with a huge stigma. It is very rarely spoken about despite it being more common than ALS, autism or ADHD. Epilepsy is a condition which can have a significant negative impact on the quality of life a person, ramifications which are primarily due to the prevailing attitudes of society at large.

Understanding epilepsy and seizures is key to raising more awareness of this condition's im-



Blex jittar kar dan il-jum, il-Berġa ta' Kastija (Ufficju tal-Prim Ministru), Palazzo Ferreria (Ministru għas-Solidarjeta u l-Gustizzja Soċjali, il-Familja u d-Disinjiet tal-Tat), Palazzo Castellania (Ministru għas-Saħħa), Cavendish House (Ministru għall-Industrija u l-Kwalita' tal-Hajja) u Casa Demandolis (Ministru għall-Finanzi) u x-Xogħol) ser jinfexx il-bid-dawl vjoła li-8, 7 u l-1 ta' Frar 2021.

www.internationalepilepsyday.org

maltaepilepsy@gmail.com

pact on a patient's general medical and psychological health. People with epilepsy can contribute to society as attested by various other famous persons who have epilepsy. This list includes Hugo Weaving, actor, Lord of the Rings; Martin Kemp, actor and Spandau Ballet bassist; Susan Boyle, singer; and Neil Young, singer.

Addressing stigma towards epilepsy by educators in educational settings is a key step in ensuring an improvement to the quality of life of persons with epilepsy. A study carried out some years ago by the University of Malta and Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association (CMEA), assessed the perceived stigma towards epilepsy by a group of educators who attended in-service training courses on epilepsy organised by CMEA. Over 100 educators (primary and secondary school teachers, personal social development, guidance teachers and learning support educators) were asked questions about their individual perception of epilepsy, before and after the training sessions. Before training, some of the attendees thought that all seizures make persons fall. Most admitted to being worried, afraid and taken by surprise on seeing a seizure for the first time. Some thought that all children with epilepsy had learning difficulties. These misconceptions were addressed throughout the course

and a similar survey held post-training, clearly indicated that most were very keen to learn more about epilepsy, develop teaching strategies for children with epilepsy, prepare a learning environment for children with epilepsy, and learn how to co-operate with parents of children with epilepsy.

This awareness cannot stop with educational institutions but must be widened to prospective employers and other social institutions. Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association (CMEA) was set up by voluntary workers in 1996. Now it lists almost 300 members. The Association is for persons with epilepsy and their families. Through education, it aims to promote local awareness about epilepsy. This is vital to tackling the experience by people with this condition in society, particularly in the employment sector. CMEA also works towards improving healthcare services, treatment and social acceptance of epilepsy, as a serious yet treatable brain disorder. It offers free training on epilepsy to all those organizations that request it.

The Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association is affiliated with the International Bureau for Epilepsy, which together with World Health Organization and the International League Against Epilepsy, is working on the Global Campaign

Against Epilepsy: Out of the Shadows. This is a unique joint venture which has the mission to improve acceptability, treatment, services and prevention of epilepsy worldwide.

These efforts are highlighted annually on International Epilepsy Day, which falls on the second Monday of February. This year it is today, 8th February 2021. More than 130 countries join together on this occasion to highlight this condition, speaking with one global voice.

Malta will also be shining a light on epilepsy today, International Epilepsy Day 2021. Several landmarks and buildings around the world, such as the Colosseum and the Eiffel Tower, being lit purple to mark the day. Malta will be joining this global initiative with the lighting of five key buildings in Valletta: Auberge de Castille, Palazzo Castellania, Palazzo Ferreria, Chevalier House and Casa Demandolis on 6th, 7th and 8th February 2021. Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association is appreciative of the immense support by the Office of Prime Minister; the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry for Health; the Ministry for Social Justice and Solidarity, the Family and Children's Rights; the Ministry for the Inclusion and Social Wellbeing and the Ministry for Finance respectively, which made this possible.

Janet Mifsud, Professor, Department of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, University of Malta; Advisor, Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association

Claudine Marika Aitken, Secretary, Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association

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Let's shine a light on epilepsy

TALKING POINT

JANET MIFSUD

Professor, Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, University of Malta



What connects this diverse group of persons: Julius Caesar, Fyodor Dostoevsky, the singer Prince, Susan Boyle and US Chief Justice John Roberts? They have all experienced one of the most misunderstood, maligned and stigmatising medical conditions – epilepsy.

Persons with epilepsy have been unfairly singled out, prosecuted and discriminated by various cultures and societies across the millennia. Persons with epilepsy have been and still are unjustly perceived as being possessed by magic or supernatural power, despite it being so common. It affects around one per cent of the population worldwide, across all ages.

This means that around 4,000 persons in Malta have epilepsy. One cannot stress enough that a person is not 'epileptic' or 'suffers from epilepsy', since such terms reinforce the stigmatisation.

Medically, we know quite a bit about epilepsy and its causes. It is defined as a tendency to have recurrent seizures (also

sometimes called fits), caused by a sudden burst of excess electrical activity in the brain, resulting in a temporary disruption in the normal message passing between brain cells. This disruption may have several causes: prenatal or birth injury, congenital malformation, infection, head trauma, brain tumour or other neurodegenerative conditions. In some persons, the cause remains unknown.

Few are aware that there are several different types of epilepsy. The symptoms seen during a seizure depend on which part of the brain is affected. Epilepsy is generally associated with the tonic clonic (grand mal) seizures that affect the whole body and is manifested by stiffness and shaking. On the other hand, in absence seizures (petit mal), the individual may just stare for a few seconds while, in focal epilepsy, only part of the brain is affected and there is generally no loss of consciousness, just some abnormal movements of the limbs. We are fortunate that, with the medical treatment available today, 70 per cent of persons with epilepsy have their seizures controlled.

So why is epilepsy still so little spoken about? Why isn't it a 'trendy' condition but is rarely discussed in the media? Why are so few persons with epilepsy ready to

share their experience and admit that they have it to their friends and colleagues? The biggest hurdles are the negative sociocultural attitudes towards epilepsy that still pervade educational, occupational and recreational spheres.

Some still mistakenly consider epilepsy as an illness which hinders employment. Others perceive it as lack of intelligence. Such erroneous public perceptions have been found to proliferate negative attitudes and drive persons with epilepsy to withdraw socially, in order to avoid discrimination and stigma.

Huge efforts are presently being made to address these misconceptions by the Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association, in conjunction with the Department of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics at the University of Malta. The vision of the association is to achieve a better life for persons with epilepsy.

The Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association offers free training to educational institutions. The attitudes of educators have a big impact on any child's academic performance, social skill development and future accomplishment. This is even more important for a child with a chronic condition such as epilepsy.

Free sessions on basic information about epilepsy and first aid for seizures are also offered to other professionals such as healthcare professionals, social workers and police officers but also to the public at large.

The Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association is affiliated to the International Bureau for Epilepsy, which, together with the

World Health Organisation and the International League Against Epilepsy, is working on the Global Campaign Against Epilepsy: Out of the Shadows.

These efforts are highlighted annually on International Epilepsy Day, which falls on the second Monday of February. This year it is today, February 8. More than 130 countries join together on this occasion to highlight this condition, speaking with one global voice.

International Epilepsy Day 2021 will see a number of landmarks and buildings around the world, such as the Colosseum and the Eiffel Tower, being lit purple to mark the day. Malta joined this global initiative with the lighting of five key buildings in Valletta: Auberge de Castille, Palazzo Castellania, Palazzo Ferreria, Chevalier House and Casa Demandols on February 6, 7 and 8.

The Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association is grateful for the support by the Office of Prime Minister; the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry for Health; the Ministry for Social Justice and Solidarity, the Family and Children's Rights; the Ministry for the Inclusion and Social Well-being and the Ministry for Finance respectively, which made this possible.

We can all endeavour to play our small part. We can all shine a light on epilepsy. Four thousand persons in Malta deserve better.

For more information and support contact maltaepilepsy@gmail.com

Janet Mifsud is also an advisor to the Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association.

“
Four thousand persons in Malta deserve better

Reproduced with kind permission of The Times of Malta.



8 February 2021 Janet Mifsud & Frank Portelli Interviewed on TVAM PBS TVM

International Epilepsy Day in conjunction with The Communications Office, University of Malta - some infographics

UM



TRUST

Turn the person on their side



TRUST

Remove harmful objects and keep away from danger



TRUST

Use a pillow or something soft under the head



TRUST

Stay calm



TRUST

Time the seizure

UM **Myth 1**

You can swallow your tongue during a seizure.



It's physically impossible to swallow one's tongue.

UM **Myth 3**

All people having a seizure lose consciousness.



Only some types of seizures include some loss of consciousness

UM **Myth 2**


Having a seizure means having to go to the hospital.



Not all seizures require hospitalisation. Most often the person will just need to recover and rest after the seizure.

UM **Myth 4**


With medication, epilepsy is a largely solved problem.



Since current treatment only controls 70% of seizures, so more research is needed

UM **Myth 5**


There is no support for persons with epilepsy in Malta.



Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association


Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association is there to support persons with epilepsy and their families
maltaepilepsy@gmail.com

UM



Julius Caesar
Roman general and statesman

UM



Fyodor Dostoevsky
Russian novelist



L-Università
ta' Malta

Nixegħlu d-dawl

Ftakar din id-data

📅 It-Tnejn, 8 ta' Frar 2021

📍 Jum Internazzjonali tal-Epilessija



International
Epilepsy Day



Caritas
MALTA



IBE International Bureau
for Epilepsy



Caritas Malta
Epilepsy Association



Ritratt ta' Joseph Magri



L-Università
ta' Malta

Let's Shine a Light

Remember the date

📅 Monday, 8 February 2021

📍 International Epilepsy Day



International
Epilepsy Day



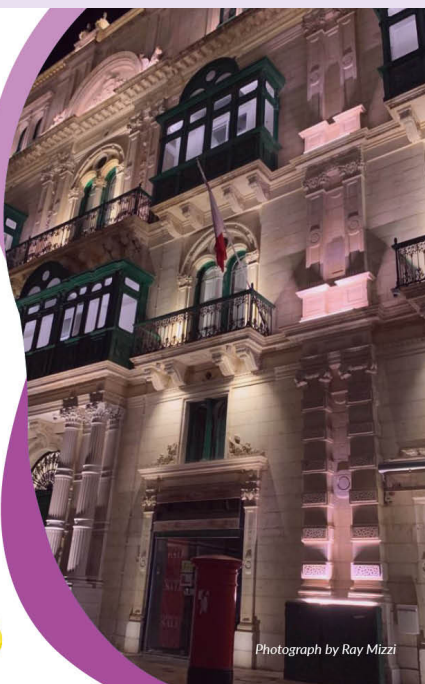
Caritas
MALTA



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for Epilepsy



Caritas Malta
Epilepsy Association



Photograph by Ray Mizzi



Julia Farrugia Portelli

OPINION

Julia Farrugia Portelli is minister for inclusion and social wellbeing

The colour purple and other hues

SYMBOLIC acts of support go a long way towards creating a greater awareness of ongoing issues such as those of inclusion and social well-being. It is why as part of International Epilepsy Day last Monday we gladly shone a light for epilepsy by turning our ministry and other buildings in Valletta purple. After all, there are 4,000 Maltese citizens who suffer from this condition and who need our unconditional and non-stop backing to help them live to their fullest potential.

The cause of inclusion, however, goes beyond any colour or slogan. It is through our everyday approach to things that matter to all of us in society that we can really make sure that no sector of the Maltese population feels isolated, forgotten or even taken for granted. The rights of so-called minorities became an instant focus of political and legislative action with the change of government in 2013. The results since then have not only been palpable, but they show there is still so much to be done within our society that is undoubtedly, among the most charitable in the world: we seek to consolidate this social backbone and cement the realities and principles we have always upheld.

It happens to be Valentine's Day today, a timely celebration of romance and love which we need to extend to other values, other than their cultural, religious and commercial significance. It embraces the very concept of mutual respect which, in these days of a horrible pandemic, forms part of humanity's fightback by way of ensuring that the social well-being achieved in the past few years is protected, acknowledged and enhanced.

Love on Valentine's Day should not be limited to romantic outpourings but ideally repackaged to help each one of us to reach out to the various sectors of Maltese society, including the disabled, the emarginated and those others extracting a life on the fringes. The same noble sentiment has to go towards the thousands of carers and front-liners in our hospitals, institutions and within the brave NGO organisations where the work is often carried out at awkward and difficult moments in people's lives, most often unseen and unsung but actually working out miracles, providing hope and instilling happiness, sometimes against all odds.

There are also carers and family members within village and town homes who deserve our attention, our gratitude as



we sustain the nation's determined efforts to make of inclusion an everyday reality rather than a spark – or a colour – here and there during special occasions on the calendar. To be part of society, to claim the same rights and an equal portion of that sense of well-being within it; this has to remain the objective.

Strengthening these rights and bringing to fruition the many targets we still have to contend with, are not a burden. It is merely the onus and the responsibility that we, as privileged administrators and political protagonists, have: to make sure they propel us into achieving better things and opening better access avenues for inclusion and social well-being.

That 65% of disabled persons in Gozo went off the unemployment list in the last four years is testament to this official commitment, and, also as significant, a

family's initiative that mushroomed into a project at Zebbug Rangers FC to help autistic children through physical exercise and the joy of football.

There is a strong sense of positivity in our purpose as we seek to give inclusion and social well-being the permanent platform they warrant on both the national and European canvases.

Laws and directives certainly provide substantial foundations, but it is through a sense of duty and a genuine belief in love-moored principles that 21st century Maltese society can take pride in its evergreen, to use another colour, evolution.

It is a process that will always be a work in progress if we really do mean to stay in touch with that same society and its various sectors as new challenges crop up and new solutions emerge.

There are 4,000 Maltese citizens who suffer from epilepsy and who need our unconditional and non-stop backing to help them live to their fullest potential

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Intervisti fuq diversi programmi tat-televizjoni għall Jum Internazzjonail tal-Epilessija



Intervista fuq Net TV fil-programm "Kikkra Te" ma' Frank Portelli u Janet Mifsud, President u Konsulenta rispettivament ta' CMEA



Intervista fuq One TV fil-programm "Espresso" ma' Frank Portelli u Claudine M. Aitken, President u Segretarja rispettivament ta' CMEA



Intervista fuq Net TV fil-programm "Kikkra Te" ma' Frank Portelli u Janet Mifsud, President u Konsulenta rispettivament ta' CMEA



Intervista fuq TVM Live fil-programm "Illum ma' Steph" ma' Frank Portelli u Janet Mifsud, President u Konsulenta rispettivament ta' CMEA



Intervista fuq One TV ma' Matthew Attard, Assistant PR ta' CMEA



Intervista fuq One TV ma' Janet Mifsud, konsulenta ta' CMEA



Robin Pinkston waqt parti minn vidjo mahdum mill-Communications Office ta' l-Universita ta' Malta u li deher fuq TVM Live.



Matthew Attard waqt parti minn vidjo mahdum mill-Communications Office ta' l-Universita ta' Malta u li deher fuq TVM Live.

Raġġ ta' dawl għall-epilessija

Diversi palazzi nxteghlu bil-vjola għall-okkażjoni tal-Jum Internazzjonali tal-Epilessija.



Casa Demandols (Ministeru għall-Finanzi u x-Xogħol)



Palazzo Ferreria (Ministeru għas-Solidarjetà u l-Gustizzja Soċjali, il-Familja u d-Drittijiet tat-Tfal)



Cavalier House (Ministeru għall-Inkluzjoni u l-Kwalità tal-Hajja)



Il-Berġa ta' Kastilja (Uffiċċju tal-Prim Ministru)



Jum Internazzjonali tal-Epilessija

IT-TNEJN, 8 TA' FRAR 2021

RAĠĠ TA' DAWL GĦALL-EPILESSJA



Blex jiflikkar dan il-jum, il-Berġa ta' Kastilja (Uffiċċju tal-Prim Ministru), Palazzo Ferreria (Ministeru għas-Solidarjetà u l-Gustizzja Soċjali, il-Familja u d-Drittijiet tat-Tfal), Palazzo Castellania (Ministeru għas-Saħħa), Cavalier House (Ministeru għall-Inkluzjoni u l-Kwalità tal-Hajja) u Casa Demandols (Ministeru għall-Finanzi u x-Xogħol) ser jnxteghlu bid-dawl vjola fis-4, 7 u 8 ta' frar 2021.

www.internationalepilepsyday.org

maltaepilepsy@gmail.com



Palazzo Castellania (Ministeru għas-Saħħa)



Manuel Camilleri membru tal-kumitat CMEA intervistat minn The People of Malta

Miġjub bil-permess ta' The People of Malta



The People of Malta

February 8 at 6:55 AM · 🌐

...

"Jiena persuna li għandi l-kundizzjoni tal-epilessija. Nghix hajja normali u jekk tarani ma tindunax li għandi din il-kundizzjoni. L-epilessija hija disturb newroloġiku li jaffettwa l-moħħ. Skoprejt li għandi din il-kundizzjoni meta kelli 45 sena. Kollox beda meta ta' 25 sena, kien waqa' fuqi bieb ta' garaxx. Żmien wara, kont qed naghmel xi xogħol u kont fuq ċint, u f'daqqa waħda tani hass hażin u spicċajt b'xorti tajba gejt f'għalqa. Hadd mis-sitt shabi li kienu miegħi ma kien jaf xi grali u kif se jgħib ruhu. Iddahħalt l-isptar u minn hemm indunaw li jien persuna bl-epilessija. Minn dak inhar bdejt niehu l-medikazzjoni u bdejt naqra dwar din il-kundizzjoni. Meta tax-xogħol saru jafu li jien persuna li għandi l-epilessija, waqqfuni. Ma qalulix li waqqfuni minhabba f'hekk. U ta' 45 sena, spicċajt bla xogħol, nirregistra. Dak iż-żmien kelli t-tifla għadha diehla l-Universita'. Ma kienx żmien faċli għall-familja. Imma sib support enormi mill-familja u mill-grupp tal-[Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association](#)

Din id-dizabilita' hija kundizzjoni li ma tidhirx. 70% ta' dawk li għandhom l-epilessija jgħixu hajja normali, u l-aċċessjonijiet (fits/seizures) li jistgħu jagħtu hom huma kkontrollati bil-medicina. Imbagħad hemm dawk it-30% li jeħtieġu attenzjoni 24/7. Hafna persuni bħali li għandhom l-epilessija jistgħu jgħixu hajja normali, jaħdmu, ikollhom familja u jikkontribwixxu għas-soċjetà.

Kull fejn immur, miegħi inġorr brazzuletta li fiha hemm il-medikazzjoni u l-informazzjoni meħtieġa dwar il-kundizzjoni tiegħi. Fuqi jkolli wkoll cards li juru x'jista' jsir f'każ li lili tagħtini aċċessjoni. Għall-persuni bħali, mhux tajjeb li nkunu fil-gholi, u qatt m'għandna nissakkru f'xi kamra għax jekk jinqala' xi haġa, ma nridux nispiċċaw waħedna. Hija esperjenza kerha immens meta persuna tagħtih aċċessjoni. U jien nissuggerixxi li min ikollu din il-kundizzjoni, jiteklimha u mhux iżommha għalih.

Hawn Malta hawn mal-4000 persuna li rregistraw li għandhom din il-kundizzjoni, b'ohrajn li jahbu jew ma jurux. Kull min irid ikun jaf iktar dwar din il-kundizzjoni, għandu jersaq lejn [Caritas Malta Epilepsy Association](#).

Illum, it-8 ta' Frar, huwa l-Jum Internazzjonali tal-Epilessija. Għal din l-okkażjoni Berġa ta' Kastilja u Palazzo Ferreria se jinxteghlu fil-vjola flimkien ma' bini importanti iehor madwar id-dinja." -

Emanuel

#EpilepsyDay

Thallix l-epilessija tikkundizzjonalek ħajtek... għix il-ħajja normali bi ftit aġġustamenti

In-Nazzjon

It-Tnejn, 8 ta' Frar, 2021

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LOKALI

FL-OKKAŻJONI TAL-JUM INTERNAZZJONALI TAL-EPILESSIJA LLUM IT-TNEJN

L-isport għenha tegħleb l-epilessija

Trudy Kerr: mill-aħħar ta' ħajjitha għall-maratoni

Christine Mamo

Kienet f'qiegħ ta' sodda waslet biex tmut iżda ma qatgħetx qalbha, anzi hadet sehem fi 11-il maratona, żewġ ultras, u għriet madwar 126 kilometru, tant li permezz l'hekk imexxielha tegħleb l-epilessija.

Din hi Trudy Kerr li fuq il-paġna personali ta' Facebook esprimiet kif fl-2010 kellha incident kważi fatali tant li sofriet minn emoragija. Fil-fatt, kollox sehħ wara li maret horse riding fejn minn hemm spiċċat għamlet jumejn mitluha minn sensu ta' spatar. Iżda kien biss wara erba' xhur li rrealizzat li hemm xi haġa iktar serja milli qat basret. Dan hekk kif bdiet issemmi lin-nanniet tagħha daqslikienu kienu għadom ħajjin meta dawn kienu ilhom mejtin madwar 20 sena.

Minn hemmhekk, kollox beda sejjer għall-aħħar hekk kif bdiet tesperjenza bħal xokkijiet ma' gisimha kollu, allucinazzjonijiet, u bħal minn episodji ta' nuqasijiet fil-memorja u diffikultajiet meta tkun qed tesprimi lilha nfijsa. Dawn kollha kienu sintomi ta' aċċessjonijiet.



Kerr għeli esperjenzat 60 aċċessjoni f'perjodu ta' bejn 24 u 72 siegħa, bit-tobba jgħidulha li s-sitwazzjoni tista' tibqa' kif inhi jew tmur għall-aħħar filwaqt li kellha tiehu tliet pilloli kuljum ħajjitha kollha. Iżda dawn il-kundizzjonijiet Kerr qatt ma aċċettathom...

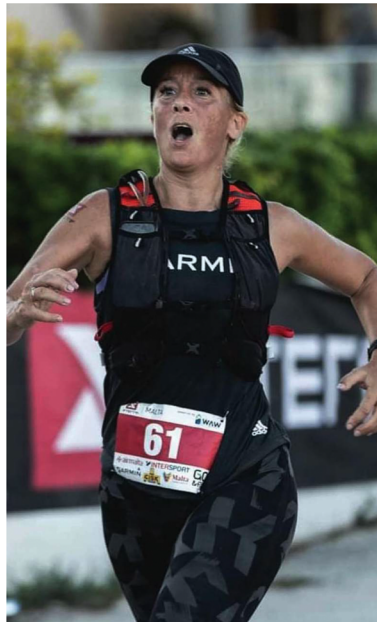
Fl-aħħar tagħha, Kerr għeli esperjenzat iktar minn 60 aċċessjoni f'perjodu ta' bejn 24 u 72 siegħa, bit-tobba jgħidulha li s-sitwazzjoni tista' tibqa' kif inhi jew tmur għall-aħħar filwaqt li kellha tiehu tliet pilloli kuljum għal ħajjitha kollha. Iżda dawn il-kundizzjonijiet, Kerr qatt ma aċċettathom.

Tliet snin wara, Kerr kellha l-opportunità li tiehu sehem fl-ewwel maratona tagħha li saret f'London, propju f'għeluq l-40 sena tagħha. Fil-istess jum, madwar id-dinja kienu se jsiru tliet ġirijiet, b'Kerr tapplika għalihom kollha biex tittanta xoriha li tiġi magħżulha għal xi waħda minnhom. Iżda mhux talli nteghzet għal waħda,

talli t-tlieta li huma hafuha fil-kelma biex tipparteċipa. Dan għaliex ma kienx komuni li persuna bl-epilessija tiehu sehem fil-ġiri minhabba xniegħa u biza' li l-ġiri kapaċi jiggrava l-kundizzjoni.

Bi preparazzjoni għall-maratona f'London, Kerr kienet għriet f'maratona li kienet saret f'Malta fl-2013, b'din il-maratona tibqa' mmarkata f'moħħ Kerr hekk kif fl-aħħar tagħha kienet esperjenzat l-aħħar aċċessjoni f'ħajjitha. Fil-fatt issa ilha seba' snin ma tesperjenza aċċessjoni waħda.

Kerr, li għal snin shah kienet ta' kuraġġ għal hafna, qalet li sabet diversi persuni li tawha s-sapport iżda fuq kollox urew li jemmu f'ha biex b'hekk imexxielha tagħmel 42 kilometru f'ġiri. U kien hawnhekk fejn ħajjet Kerr inqalbet ta' taht fuq tant li l-ġiri wassalha biex tifiq mill-epilessija mingħajr ma hadet ebda tip ta' medikina.



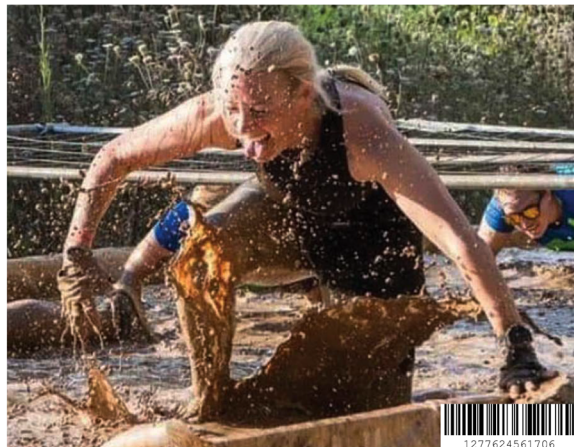
TRUDY KERR: "M'iniex atleta... M'iniex zghira fl-età. Iżda jien determinata għax jien ikbar mill-iskużi."



Par żarbun wieħed se jwassalha fejn tixtieq!

Kerr tgħid li tinsab ċerta li din is-sena se għib magħha hafna sfidi iżda par żarbun wieħed se jwassalha fejn tixtieq! Par żarbun li mhux talli ghen lilha, iżda wkoll lil-ambjent minhabba li hu magħmul minn plastik riċiklat li nstab f'qiegħ ta' baħar.

"M'iniex atleta," qalet Kerr. "M'iniex zghira fl-età. Iżda jien determinata għax jien ikbar mill-iskużi."



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