

Putting Nutrition at the Heart of Patient Care

ESPEN Congress 44th European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism

In September, BSNA attended the 44th European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN) Congress in Vienna. More than 4,100 individuals from 105 countries participated either in person or virtually at this world leading conference dedicated to the advancement of research, innovation and practice in clinical nutrition and metabolism.

It was fitting, therefore, that the Congress saw the official signing of the 'Vienna Declaration' - The International Declaration on the Human Right to Nutritional Care 2022.¹ This important statement on the right to nutritional care as an intrinsic human right embodies five key principles that cover fulfilment of the right to nutritional care, clinical nutrition education and research, ethical principles and values, institutional culture and patient empowerment, making it relevant to us all, whether we are involved in the design and delivery of nutritional care at policy, practice, industry, education or research level.

The Declaration is endorsed by ESPEN, the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ASPEN), Federación Latino Americana de Terapia Nutricional (FELANPE) and the Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition Society of Asia (PENSA), along with the European Patients' Forum (EPF) and the European Federation of Associations of Dietitians (EFAD), and a global network of more than 70 national societies, who have all committed to promote and defend the recognition of nutritional care as a human right on behalf of all members of their societies. It is hoped that the strength and breadth of the expert groups supporting the declaration will demonstrate the need for policy makers across governments and health systems to engage with the campaign, to secure the formal recognition of nutritional care as a human right.

Access to nutritional care is a human right intrinsically linked to the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of an individual and their family, including food and medical care, as set out in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.² Although there is growing evidence that effective nutritional care helps to minimise and manage malnutrition and improve disease outcomes, it is still the case that many patients across the globe do not have access to high quality nutritional care. This includes ensuring there is effective screening for malnutrition, diagnosis and assessment of disease-related malnutrition and food, and evidence based medical nutrition therapy for all who need it.

The ESPEN Congress itself contributes to the aims of the Declaration by providing a rich and varied programme of Life-Long Learning sessions,

hands on workshops, scientific, educational and abstract sessions to facilitate cross-fertilisation of ideas, research progress and improvements in practice.

Emerging themes and key topics from this year included the importance of physical activity combined with meeting protein needs to stimulate muscle protein synthesis, the ongoing need to step up efforts to strengthen malnutrition screening in practice using validated tools, the fibre gap, gut health, nutrition and the microbiome, nutrition metabolism and stress, clinical nutrition in primary healthcare and many sessions focusing on ESPEN guidelines, specific diseases, age groups, or routes of nutrition support. Industry partners had an extensive programme of satellite symposia and an exhibition showcasing innovations in medical nutrition, devices and related areas.

If you weren't able to attend, you can still access the content in a variety of ways. ESPEN members can access videos of presentations online until the end of December. The Congress Abstracts will be published in Clinical Nutrition ESPEN and many of the industry exhibitors will have information available via their websites. The 45th ESPEN Congress will take place in Lyon, France, on 11-14th September 2023, with the theme of Live Healthy with Optimal Nutrition.

In all, the ESPEN Congress provided an abundance of opportunities to learn, share and network with an inspiring and dedicated community committed to the principles of the 'Vienna Declaration'. BSNA is determined to work with our coalition partners to ensure the principles set out in the declaration become a reality in the UK and across the globe.



References: 1. Nutritional Care is a Human Right. The International Declaration on the Human Right to Nutritional Care: 'Vienna Declaration'. Accessed online: www.espen.org/files/ESPEN-Fact-Sheet-Nutritional-care-is-a-human-right.pdf (Sep 2022). 2. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. United Nations Department of Public Information. Accessed online: www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/universal-declaration/translations/english (Sep 2022).

About the British Specialist Nutrition Association

BSNA is the trade association representing the manufacturers of products designed to meet the particular nutritional needs of individuals; these include specialist products for infants and young children (including infant formula, follow-on formula, young child formula and complementary weaning foods), medical nutrition products for diseases, disorders and medical conditions, including oral nutritional supplements, enteral tube feeding and parenteral nutrition, as well as companies who aseptically compound chemotherapy, parenteral nutrition and CIVAS.