

BONE AND JOINT DECADE – NICK WELCH

(Lay corresponding member of the BOA PLG)

I am delighted to have been appointed an International Ambassador of the Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health of the Bone & Joint Decade. It will give me an opportunity to promote the patient perspective in line with the goals and principles of the Organisation to a new, and hopefully, wider audience. Below is a summary of the Organisation (full details are available at:

<http://bjdonline.org/>)

Our Goals

The goals of the Bone and Joint Decade are central to raising recognition of the importance of musculoskeletal conditions at global, regional and national levels by:

- raising awareness of the burden of musculoskeletal conditions
- developing sustainable networks
- increasing knowledge of the suffering and costs of musculoskeletal conditions
- empowering people to prioritise their own care
- improving access to cost-effective prevention and treatment
- increasing research into musculoskeletal disorders, prevention and treatment
- providing access to supportive information

National Action Networks (NAN):

The mission of the BJD is to raise awareness of MSC's throughout the globe. This can be achieved by coordinated advocacy campaigning that ensures a consistent and persistent message reaches the minds of those responsible for determining health policy internationally, regionally and in each country.

The UK NAN is under the aegis of ARMA (Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance)

Call to Action:

Considering that:

- Musculoskeletal health is essential for active working lives and independence throughout the lifecourse
- Musculoskeletal disorders are common in all countries and cultures
- Major cause of disability worldwide (second worldwide, first in developed countries)
- They are a major burden on health and social care
- They are a major cause of work loss and loss of economic independence
- The burden is increasing with the ageing of the population, whereas the extending of working lives is increasing the physical demands on individuals and the need for musculoskeletal health.
- There are effective ways of promoting musculoskeletal health
- There are effective ways of preventing and controlling musculoskeletal conditions to avoid disability but these are not being implemented with equity
- There is a current lack of policies and priorities for promoting musculoskeletal health and a lack of investment in prevention, treatment, education and research of musculoskeletal conditions

We call for explicit plans by governments, health policy makers at regional level and the WHO to deal with the large and growing burden of musculoskeletal conditions and injuries on individuals and society through

- promotion of an active lifestyle that will optimise musculoskeletal health at all ages
- preventing musculoskeletal disorders and injuries
- identifying and treating those who are at highest risk
- access to timely, safe, appropriate patient-centred treatment to control symptoms, and diseases where possible, to prevent unnecessary disability
- access to appropriate rehabilitation to reduce any disability, including self management
- enabling people to participate in the labour market
- research to advance knowledge and care

The Role of International Ambassadors:

The Bone and Joint Decade Ambassador programme honours outstanding service and achievement by leaders in the musculoskeletal community. Comprising both health-care professionals and patient advocates, BJD Ambassadors promote the mission of the Decade internationally and within their countries, assist National Action Network development, facilitate strategic contacts and work with the International Coordinating Council to achieve the goals of the Decade.