

Highlighting the gaps in knowledge and services for Shingles in Canada

TORONTO, Mar 3, 2023 - The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) is proud to announce the successful launch of the Shingles Awareness Week in Canada Campaign, which ran from the 27th February – 5th March 2023. Following the successful inaugural Shingles Awareness Week in 2022 and in collaboration with GSK Canada, the IFA was pleased to celebrate and continue to bring awareness to the critical importance of adult vaccination throughout the second year of Shingles Awareness Week in Canada.

Originating from the same virus that causes chickenpox, shingles typically develops later in life, with some developing it earlier in life as well.(1) It affects thousands of Canadians each year with 130,000 new cases annually, 17,000 reports of postherpetic neuralgia and 20 deaths.(1) Adults over 50 years of age and adults with a weakened immune system are most at risk of shingles, with approximately 1 in 5 patients suffering complications including long-lasting nerve pain that can last for months and even years impairing quality of life. Other complications while rare can include cardiovascular and cerebrovascular events(2), hearing loss(3), cranial involvement(4) and scarring.(5)

Despite vaccination being the most effective preventative measure against shingles, vaccination remains low due to lack of awareness, vaccine hesitancy and cost.

“Many people do not know what shingles is, their risk factor, and how they can protect themselves. Even if they know what shingles is, many do not understand the impact it can have on their life or their loved one’s life. It is a debilitating disease that can cause many to miss out on precious moments in their lives,” said Delina Narendran, Project Officer at the IFA who is working on executing Shingles Awareness Week.

The Shingles Awareness Week in Canada Campaign will target policy makers, and patient and advocacy organizations to address the gaps in knowledge and services pertaining to shingles and ultimately raise awareness around shingles, its impact and the risk it poses to older Canadians. The campaign will feature a variety of communications, including a 2-part podcast series with Dr Marla Shapiro (clinical expert and best-selling author) and Ms Jenna Greenspoon who will provide the invaluable patient perspective. Other elements included are a Q&A video which will answer some of the most frequently asked questions about shingles, a twitter fact sheet, and a comprehensive message bank designed and curated to equip Canadians with the information necessary to pursue healthy ageing and make informed decisions regarding preventative measures such as vaccination

More information on the IFA can be found at www.ifa.ngo or @IFAgeing on all social media platforms.

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The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) is an international, non-governmental organization (NGO) with a unique membership base comprising government, NGOs, academics, industry, and individuals in over 80 countries. Nearly 50 years old, the IFA has become known as a leading and innovative organization that works across disciplines and sectors toward common goals that improve the lives of older people. Through the IFA’s formal relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and general consultative status at the United Nations and its agencies, the IFA is in the position to advocate directly with member states and contribute to and inform intergovernmental dialogue.

References:

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