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SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT ABOUT STRESS!

REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL STRESS AWARENESS DAY 2017

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Report on International Stress Awareness Day 2017

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1. INSAD in the UK

Stress prevention and raising the profile of mental health issues have never been more important – 11.7 million working days were lost in 2015-16 due to stress, depression or anxiety, according to the Health and Safety Executive.

It is therefore all the more important that ISMA continues working to increase the profile of stress awareness, campaigning against the stigma associated with stress and mental health issues, and offering professional expertise and knowledge to manage stress.

Each year, International Stress Awareness Day, our flagship event, gives ISMA a high-profile platform to publicise these issues to an ever-growing audience. The most impressive INSAD yet was held for the nineteenth year on 1st November 2017, with the theme **Speak Up and Speak Out About Stress**.

Carole Spiers, Chair of ISMA UK, said, 'Stress can affect performance, both at home and at work, which can lead to mental health issues. ISMA offers professional expertise and knowledge for the prevention and reduction of stress and is an advocate of best practice in the field of stress management. We want to raise the profile of stress and mental health issues and to campaign against the stigma still associated with them. INSAD provides an ideal opportunity to get these messages across and offers members of the public and the business community the chance to talk to our Advisors, both in person and online.'

INSAD 2017 went international for the first time and countries from around the world took part, really putting the 'I' into ISMA. ISMA members in Belgium, Italy, Gibraltar, India, Nigeria and the USA supported INSAD by holding webinars, workshops, corporate wellness days, health centre discussions and consultations. Their reports follow next, after the UK section.

In the UK, there were some big successes, including innovative events and services held for the first time in 2017. These are detailed here –

Stress Fair at Virgin Active Health Club, Broadgate, London EC2

The first-ever Stress Fair, co-hosted by ISMA and Virgin Active, was a great success. ISMA stress consultants were on hand to give Virgin Active members and other visitors helpful tips on managing stress, developing resilience and getting healthier.

There were consultations with nutritional and massage therapists on offer, exercise demonstrations provided by Virgin Active, and exhibitors of relevant products and services, such as Relaxback UK, Empowered by Food, City Massage London, Filament Publishing. Virgin Active were pleased with the event and thought it was ideal for their members (see testimonials).

Stress Chatbot Helpline

The first-ever online Stress Helpline was set up, to enable anyone suffering from stress to find a listening ear and receive guidance on where to go for help. The Chatbot was accessed via ISMA's home page, and manned by ISMA Stress Advisors between 5-8 pm on 1st November. It was open to anyone in the UK or internationally. This service will be extended as an all-day helpline for 2018.

International Stress Summit

The very first online stress summit was conceived and hosted by international members of ISMA UK in Belgium. It ran from 9 am to 5 pm (UK time) and featured thirteen interviews with international experts on stress. To take part, people had to register online, and 117 people signed up. Considering this was its first airing, the summit was very successful and will be expanded next year.

For a more detailed summary, see international section of this report.

ISMA Stress Survey

A nationwide Stress Survey was carried out by ISMA during October, and a report of the findings was published on Wednesday 1st November. Contributions were made by more than 350 participants from businesses, public sector and third sector organisations around the UK.

It showed the devastating effects that work-related stress is having on the lives of people in the UK, revealing that, although 94% of people experience work-related stress, only 32% feel they can speak to their line manager or HR department about it. The survey also indicated that work-related issues contribute more to people's stress levels than difficulties regarding relationships, health and finances combined.

Carole Spiers, ISMA UK Chair, said, 'Our survey shows that levels of work-related stress have increased significantly in the last five years alone - with 91% of individuals saying that stress causes them to experience symptoms such as feeling panicked, depressed, anxious, irritable and being unable to cope, as well as having difficulties with sleep and concentration. Almost half of respondents said that work-related stress has a negative effect on their ability to do their job, with 57% saying this culminated in them having to take time off work'.

ISMA's Stress Survey will be carried out again in 2018.

University of East Anglia's Mindfulness and Resilience Day for NHS Managers

Contributed by Dr Laura Ginesi and Dr Patricia Harris

To mark INSAD, Dr Laura Ginesi and a colleague from the mental health team offered a mindfulness and resilience (CPD) day for NHS managers. The day was extremely well attended and delegates included doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and clinical psychologists, representing the range of different health professions. The day was designed to provide a safe environment in which people could speak up about specific challenges within their area of healthcare practice and the impact these were having on individual and team performance in these demanding times.

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The feedback received highlighted the day as a great opportunity for building emotional resilience, personal capacity, and leadership skills.

Dr Patricia Harris (who attended the ISMA conference for this first time this year) has started offering weekly drop-in sessions to provide more academic support within the School of Health Sciences. The level of academic anxiety that exists has been surprising - even to us. This highlights the high levels of pressure experienced by the cohorts and the need to build resilience into the curriculum. Patricia held a curriculum review workshop with Allied Health educators in November and the Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy courses are making changes based on this. A similar review is due to take place after Christmas for the Nursing curriculum.

A week later, Laura took part in the STEM week for 'I'm a scientist, get me out of here', part of the Stress Zone sponsored by the Physiological Society as one of their year of stress-themed events during 2017. The chatrooms were fast and furious with lots of interesting and challenging questions from school-age students. Laura got down to the last two but sadly got evicted on the final afternoon, when she had to go and give a lecture, so was unable to stay and battle it out in the chatroom!

Ongoing bi-monthly mindfulness and stress prevention workshops for paramedics are proving to be a successful introduction to the curriculum.

ISMA Workshops and Presentations Around the UK

ISMA packs for Stress Advisors and Presenters were produced. They contained everything necessary to run a successful event. If there wasn't a local event, ISMA offered a wealth of free downloadable support materials and fact sheets to help anyone who wants to reduce stress and enhance wellbeing and performance at work.

2. INSAD Around the World

'Every year, the International Stress Management Association holds events to promote stress awareness and stress prevention around the world. In November, for International Stress Awareness Day (INSAD), our branches and members held conferences and seminars and organised the first free online Stress Summit.

During November there were also a large number of INSAD-related posts on social media, which helped to keep stress management on the international agenda. INSAD 2017 has been a great success and our thanks go to everyone involved in making it so effective.'

*Professor Stephen Palmer PhD CPsychol CSci CMIOSH FISMA (Hon)
Honorary President, International Stress Management Association (UK)*

Belgium

Contributed by Tom Meyers and Danielle Sax

For INSAD 2017, we organised the first free online Stress Summit. We took on the challenge of providing a full day (9:00 am - 5:00 pm) of continuous broadcasting of interviews with global stress experts from 7 different countries (US, CA, EN, AU, AT, DE and BE). For each speaker, we arranged an authentic pre-recorded interview on their expertise and experience in relation to the INSAD theme, *Speak Up and Speak Out About Stress*.

A website www.insad2017.com was set up to tell people about the experts and the event itself. Visitors were encouraged to register in advance to watch the broadcast on the day.

By registering, people got free gifts connected to the theme of stress and were kept informed about the happenings behind the scenes until 1st November. Even now, some weeks after the event, people can still register on the website to view and review all the interviews ... and they do.

In total, the website has been visited 670 times from 40 different countries since 1st October, with more than half the visitors (from 17 countries) visiting the site on 1st November itself.

The private page on which the summit could be followed received 208 visitors on 1st November, according to Google Analytics. Statistics from the platform Viloud (on which the video was posted) recorded more than 300 plays on the day itself and just under 300 since.

Considering this was our first online Stress Summit and that it was set up in less than 3 months, we are both very happy with the result and will build on this year's experience, ready for next year. Already, we have experts asking us if they can contribute to the Stress Summit broadcast in 2018.

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Gibraltar

Contributed by Geraldine Canepa

International Stress Awareness Day 2017 in Gibraltar was fantastic, and events continued throughout the week.

Wednesday 1st November began with a stress talk featuring a local company, incorporating chair yoga and breathing techniques. This was followed by an interview with Gibraltar Broadcast Radio and later with the Television News department. I spoke about ISMA and its role for the last 19 years, and also mentioned stress management techniques you can apply in your personal life and in the workplace.

I also held a stress management workshop for breast cancer patients. They found it very interesting and really enjoyed the 30-minute relaxation session I undertook with them.

Finally, a few days ago, I recorded a 20-minute programme for local television. For this programme, I brought along two of my recovered patients who spoke about how stress had affected them and how all the techniques they learned have helped them to recover from the symptoms of stress and anxiety.

India

Contributed by Dr B. Udaya Kumar Reddy

For INSAD, ISMA India conducted a series of stress management interventions to raise stress awareness.

4th International Conference on Stress Management

We had over 230 delegates and academicians participating in this two-day international conference. Around 100+ papers were presented, relating to stress and its impact on education, health and occupation.

Awards were presented to individuals and organisations who are contributing significantly in the field of stress management, specifically in the categories of Awareness, Training, Research and Counselling.

ICSMP Flagship International Workshop on Stress Safety Net Implementation for Agile Workforces in Organisations

The stress safety net is a systematic programme that covers –

- Awareness of the impact of stress on personal and professional performance
- Assessment of the impact of different types of stress on individuals
- Stress coaching: empowering employees to overcome their personal stress with various techniques
- Online counselling support for those suffering from acute stress, using a one-to-one online counselling platform

Twenty-three professionals from different corporate and industry backgrounds attended this workshop and prepared action plans to implement stress awareness within their organisations.

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ISMA India Flagship National Workshop on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Stress Counselling

This workshop was focused on providing stress management professionals with greater knowledge and skills on how to use cognitive behavioural therapy in their stress counselling work. Around twenty-five counselling and stress management professionals benefited from this workshop.

To ensure greater participation from this group for ICSM 2018, we are planning to hold it on 10th and 11th November 2018. We shall keep you all posted as we progress with our plans.

Italy

Contributed by Dr Pier Michele Mandrillo, Doctor Surgeon, Aesthetic Doctor

For the second time, International Stress Awareness Day was held in the city of Taranto. It was organized by Dr Pier Michele Mandrillo and Dr Tarantino, Professor at the Universities of Foggia and Tor Vergata Rome, as International President of Aestheate International Scientific Academy (AISA) and members of the International Stress Management Association (ISMA UK), a prestigious association for the promotion of stress prevention and wellbeing.

International Stress Awareness Day, founded by Carole Spiers, Chair, ISMA UK, and commemorated since 1998 in various countries on the same day, is an event dedicated to raising awareness of stress and its prevention. Staging a health-related life-science initiative of this calibre has brought it international scientific and media recognition.

Since INSAD was first held in Italy, the news reporting and coverage gained has led to it enjoying the patronage of many national scientific societies. This year, the event was organized in collaboration with the Polisportiva Cupri team.

This year's theme was about stress in all its manifestations. Since our event was hosted in a fitness centre, the subtitle was 'Lo Sport: An Anti-Stress'. Various qualified scientific reports dealt with stress in all respects. Dr Mandrillo brought greetings from ISMA UK and played a welcome message from Carole Spiers on video. Our speakers then addressed subjects in sequence –

- From Stress to De-Stress: New Therapeutic Strategies
Dr Pier Michele Mandrillo, Doctor Surgeon, Aesthetic Doctor
- Engine Activity: An Anti-Stress
Dr Ignatius Aprile, Surgeon, Specialist in Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine
- Power and Emotions: The Stress That Does Not Appear
Dr Piero Lombardi, Pharmacist
- Psychological Stress and Coping Strategies
Dr Anna Arena, Psychologist / Psychotherapist
- Anti-Stress Sport: Competition in 'Live'
Dr Paola Cupri, Doctor of Science and Technology of Sport

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The event, publicised on private television and in local newspapers, attracted much interest from over 150 participants aged 15-65. Many young athletes were accompanied by their families, several of whom brought their healthcare experience to sportsmen who practice sports activities daily, using this as a time to manage and combat stress.

All speakers and participants received the gift of an apple, bearing the slogan 'An apple a day reduces stress'.

USA

Contributed by Heidi Hanna, PhD

For INSAD 2017, the American Institute of Stress featured three primary outreach opportunities.

First, we provided a free 1-day pass to the 2017 Global Stress Summit (www.globalstresssummit.com), featuring 35 leading researchers and thought leaders in fields related to neuroscience, stress management, mindfulness, nutrition and fitness. Second, we hosted a few Facebook Live Q&A sessions within different groups - reaching about 5,000 viewers.

Third, we partnered with the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor (www.aath.org) to host a 'What's So Funny About Stress' Comic Caption Contest. Submissions and final winners can be found at the Beyond Funny FB Page - www.facebook.com/webeyondfunny.

Coming up in April 2018, AATH will be hosting their annual conference in San Diego (chaired by AIS Executive Director, Heidi Hanna) on the theme of Humor and Resilience. CE and CME credits are available - please see www.aath.org for details, or you can view the full schedule at <https://aath2018conferencesandiego.sched.com/>.

We also circulated a press release about INSAD and will look for more media and outreach opportunities in 2018.

Also for 2018, we are working on the programme for our first live conference in many years, and would welcome ISMA participants if they would like to join us and/or contribute. We anticipate this conference will have a combat/military stress theme as well as a civilian/general theme, and are hoping it will be held in May in San Diego. More details will be available in early 2018.

3. Media, Social Media and Testimonials

Media

There was a vast amount of coverage in the UK and worldwide related to International Stress Awareness Day, stress and mental health issues. This included pieces in the *Telegraph*, the *Independent*, the *Huffington Post*, the *Daily Mirror* and *The Sun*. The *Telegraph* article included a quote from an ISMA Fellow and the online version gave a link to the ISMA website, which drove considerable traffic there.

In total there were 19 mentions of the INSAD campaign in the national press, 63 mentions in the regional press, 27 mentions in the trade press, 10 mentions on the radio and 5 in consumer publications.

The hashtag #nationalstressawarenessday was mentioned by a number of high-profile media channels including the *Independent*, the *Telegraph*, and the *Evening Standard*. Most media coverage referred to INSAD as *International Stress Awareness Day* as a direct result of our press releases and media activity.

The coverage showed that local businesses had joined forces to raise awareness of the detrimental effect of stress on their workforce.

The farming trade press also showed particular interest in INSAD, as high levels of stress exist amongst the farming community.

Social Media

On social media INSAD received *over 2 million* impressions across the UK and in several other countries, including Canada, the USA, Saudi Arabia, and Scandinavia. The hashtags used were #nationalstressawarenessday, #internationalstressawarenessday and #insad2017.

Krishan Lahar, ISMA Social Media Manager, commented, 'Once again, Twitter was inundated with tweets referring to International Stress Awareness Day and there were plenty of mentions on Facebook too. Activity began in the run up to INSAD, and our fingers could hardly keep up with the number of tweets and mentions as the day progressed. Activity continued into the early hours of the following day, as the USA chimed in with enthusiasm. #NationalStressAwarenessDay was trending worldwide and was mentioned by high profile media channels such as *The Independent*, *The Telegraph* and the *Evening Standard*. TV presenter Anna Richardson launched an online therapy service on the day, and it was nice to see the staff network at Imperial College, London supporting INSAD'.

Testimonials on INSAD 2017

'An absolutely fantastic event that we had the pleasure of hosting at Virgin Active Broadgate. Carole and her team attended in numbers and offered our members something quite different - perfect for our membership base! It was a pleasure working with the ISMA team and we look forward to doing so again in the future.'

Kieren McLaren, Sales Manager, Virgin Active UK

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'I was very pleased to have exhibited at the first London Stress Fair, co-hosted by ISMA and Virgin Active Health Clubs on November 1st. While I was there, I met a wide range of fabulously interesting people who were attending the Fair, as well as other exhibitors. The variety of people who were present came from all walks of life, which is appropriate really, as stress can affect pretty much anyone. My thanks to Carole Spiers for arranging such an important event, which I hope will not be the last.'

Mike Dilke, Managing Director, Relaxback UK/ Back App UK Ltd

'The London Stress Fair, co-hosted by ISMA and Virgin Active, provided an excellent opportunity for different therapies to come together and show individuals how they can start to build their resilience to stress. There was a warm and friendly atmosphere, contributing to the spirit of the occasion. I think the work ISMA are doing to raise the profile of stress and mental health issues is immensely important.'

Meredy Birdi, Lead Dietitian and Director, The Keyhole Heart Clinic

'I was thrilled to get the opportunity of exhibiting at such a well-organised event. The ISMA team had put together a group of diverse resources and practitioners who looked at stress from a holistic viewpoint. Meeting the other exhibitors and chatting to the ISMA team afforded me a great learning experience. It was also extremely rewarding to be able to contribute something for Fair visitors wanting to improve their health. It was such a relaxed but fun atmosphere.'

Deeba Anandan, Nutritional Therapist, DipNUT; mBANT; mNNA; rCNHC, Empowered by Food, Find Your Path to Wellbeing

'I really liked ISMA's excellent training materials for workshop presenters and will certainly be using them in training and coaching roles, as part of my counselling work, in the future.'

Jo Dickie, Organisational counsellor, trainer and coach

'Carole and her team applied a huge amount of energy to get [#internationalstressawarenessday](#) around the world to come together. Amongst many activities taking place, the Stress Awareness Survey, released on the day itself, was, I believe, the best-ever collaborative report on stress and mental health in ISMA's history. There was also much preparation for the first-ever Stress Fair – a successful event co-hosted with Virgin Active in Broadgate, which I was pleased to attend. The Fair went well - ISMA members gave out stress test cards and people took the opportunity to talk to us. Members of the public visited and enjoyed hearing from the nutritionist and having a back massage - to name just two of the exhibitors. Overall, there was a really nice atmosphere, everyone enjoyed themselves, and Virgin gym members came along to find out what it was all about.'

So hats off to Carole for visualising everything in the first place, and then getting a large body of people together to make [#internationalstressawarenessday](#) and all its events and activities happen.'

Chris Clark, ISMA Trustee

4. A Look Ahead to INSAD 2018

INSAD celebrates its twentieth anniversary in 2018, so we need to make it a very special year. The whole week 5th – 9th November will be devoted to stress awareness, with INSAD on Wednesday 7th and ISMA's annual conference, *Growth 2018*, on Friday 9th.

The theme for 2018 will be *Does Hi-Tech Cause Hi-Stress?* It will look at two sides of technology: on the one hand, the stressful effects of the 24/7 lifestyle that technology has brought, and on the other, the positive contribution that technology can make, helping us manage our lives better. Technology impacts on all our lives, and it is appropriate that ISMA is involved in a debate about the positive and the adverse effects it can have, and how we can use technology to our advantage.

Carole Spiers commented, 'In 2017, members of the Royal family made public statements of support on mental health-related issues. This intervention gives us hope that we may look forward to a new culture of openness about stress and mental health issues. With a shift in attitudes, we hope there will be a renewed interest in stress management, as promoted by ISMA.'

'Ending the stigma associated with mental health is an organisational imperative and the ISMA focus for 2018 will continue to be on the effects of stress and mental health issues and the promotion of wellbeing in the workplace.'

Further Information

For more information about International Stress Awareness Day and INSAD 2018, about ISMA, or about stress management, please visit www.isma.org.uk or contact Carole Spiers, Chair, ISMA^{UK}, and Founder, National Stress Awareness Day at admin@isma.org.uk.