IOF-ESCEO World Congress on Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis and Musculoskeletal Diseases — 2023: the Ukrainian Association of Osteoporosis participation

On May 4–7, 2023, the charming city of Barcelona, Spain, hosted one of the most prominent annual scientific medical events for specialists working with patients who have musculoskeletal disorders, such as osteoporosis, osteoarthritis and sarcopenia, at the CCIB Barcelona Convention Center — the IOF-ESCEO World Congress on Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis and Musculoskeletal Diseases. After three years, during which the congress was held online due to the COVID pandemic, more than 6,000 delegates from all continents gathered together again in person for four days this year to discuss pressing professional issues, share experiences and new achievements in diagnostics and treatment of osteoporosis and other musculoskeletal system diseases.

The Ukrainian Association of Osteoporosis has been an invariable participant of the IOF-ESCEO World Congress since the beginning of its existence, which is, in fact, more than 20 years; and this year, it hasn’t been an exception, in spite of the severe war conditions which now Ukraine lives in and Ukrainian doctors work. Noteworthy, last year, in 2022, the Ukrainian Association of Osteoporosis was meant to hold a National Satellite Symposium within the framework of the IOF-ESCEO Congress — 2022 for the first time in all the years of its work, but, unfortunately, it must have been cancelled as a result of the full-scale russian invasion of Ukraine, which placed Ukrainian scientists, along with Ukrainian doctors and other health care workers, in extremely formidable working conditions as well as their own survival.

As a matter of course, this invasion has become quite a challenge for the Ukrainian Association of Osteoporosis, so this year, in spite of the severe living and working conditions during the war, the members of the Association put maximum efforts into preparing a worthy representation of Ukraine at the IOF-ESCEO Congress — 2023. The main goal of Ukrainian specialists was not only to take part in scientific oral and poster sessions but also to highlight the work of the Ukrainian Association of Osteoporosis during the war, to familiarize the world medical community with the challenges that doctors in Ukraine must face for the second year in a row as well as to talk about the ways to overcome them.

In total, 23 poster presentations by scientists from different regions of Ukraine were presented at the IOF-ESCEO Congress — 2023, in which, especially, the activities of hospitals and regional osteoporosis centers in wartime were covered. Noteworthy, during the poster sessions, the Ukrainian report stands attracted special interest from the Congress participants. In addition to exchanging professional experience, the delegates from different parts of the world came by to express their support for Ukrainian scientists and our country.

Moreover, the President of the Ukrainian Association of Osteoporosis, MD, Professor Nataliia Grygorieva delivered an oral presentation dedicated to the development of criteria for establishing sarcopenic obesity in the Ukrainian population “Appendicular lean mass and fat percentages cutoff values to define sarcopenic obesity in Ukraine community-dwelling older adults” (authors of the report: N.V. Grygorieva, M.A. Bystrytska, A.S. Musienko) on May 6 at the plenary meeting of the Committee of National Societies. The report’s inclusion into the program of the Congress plenary session highlights the scientific value and the role of Ukrainian scientists who, in spite of the war, carry out scientific research at a high methodological level.

Another special annual tradition of the IOF-ESCEO Congress is the organization of the CNS village — the platform of the Committee of National Osteoporosis Societies, located in the hall of the Convention Center, where different National Associations, which had previously applied for participation and received a Committee approval, place their representatives, and with the assistance of photo and promotional materials as well as communication with congress delegates, highlight the activities of their Association over the past year.

This year, the Ukrainian Association of Osteoporosis also submitted an application to participate in the work of CNS Village and received an invitation to place its representatives. With the mutual efforts of Professor Nataliia Grygorieva, the President of the Ukrainian Association of Osteoporosis, employees of The Ukrainian Scientific-Medical Center for Osteoporosis, the Department of Clinical Physiology and...
Pathology of the Musculoskeletal System of the “D.F. Che- 
botarev Institute of Gerontology of the NAMS of Ukraine”
managers and employees of regional osteoporosis centers 
from different regions of Ukraine developed poster photo re-
ports, which helped to familiarize the Congress participants 
with the state of affairs regarding the medical care provision 
to patients with osteoporosis and other musculoskeletal diseases 
in Ukraine during the war with Russia. Without exaggeration, 
among all representatives of national osteoporosis societies, 
which participated in CNS as part of this year’s Congress, the 
platform of the Ukrainian Association of Osteopo-
rosis was the most popular among congress participants.

The representatives from different countries that support 
Ukraine in the modern war with Russia asked in detail about 
the activities of Ukrainian doctors, they looked at photos of 
the hospitals and cities destroyed by Russian attackers with curi-
osity as well as photos of everyday life in Ukrainian medical in-
stitutions, the working conditions of Ukrainian doctors in 
the territories where active hostilities are taking place, expressed 
their admiration for the courage and dedication of Ukrainian 
doctors, spoke genuine words of support for Ukraine and 
wished the earliest possible Victory to our country.

Another significant event for the Ukrainian Association of 
Osteoporosis during the IOF-ESCEO World Congress — 
2023 was the receipt of the award for the best organization 
of the Osteoporosis Day in Ukraine in 2022. As it is known, 
World Osteoporosis Day is celebrated every year on the 20th 
of October, but activities, which are aimed at raising pub-
lic awareness of this problem are carried out throughout the 
whole month. In Ukraine, the annual Osteoporosis Day has 
been held since 2006. In 2021, the Ukrainian Association of 
Osteoporosis obtained a grant from the International Osteo-
porosis Foundation (IOF), which was used to develop the 
organization of work with patients in social networks and on-
line, which, in fact, was primarily useful during the COVID 
pandemic; moreover, the Ukrainian Center for Osteoporosis 
Problems (Kyiv) received the IOF distinction as one of the 
best branches of the Fracture Care System (FLS). Then, the 
Ukrainian Association of Osteoporosis developed activity in 
social networks and the acquired experience of working in an 
online format became extremely useful, when, in relation to 
the Russian full-scale invasion, beginning from February 24, 
2022, the possibilities of counseling and providing medical care 
were limited, especially, in some regions where assist-
tance to patients with osteoporosis in person disappeared.

In spite of the Russian invasion in Ukraine in 2022, the 
Ukrainian Association of Osteoporosis and its branches in 
the regions, as part of World Osteoporosis Day in October 
2022, held a large number of events both for patients (in-
person examination and educational work; the dates and 
place of the events are not disclosed due to security issues in 
conditions of constant bombardment), and for the medical 
community (in particular, on the online platform OsteoHub, 
two scientific webinars — October 5th “Autumn debate on vi-
tamin D: should we resume its use?” and October 19th — the 
After a scrutinized analysis of the work reports, the Interna-
tional Osteoporosis Foundation declared the organization of 
World Osteoporosis Day — 2022 events in Ukraine as the 
best. The award was presented to the President of the Ukrai-
nian Association of Osteoporosis, MD, Professor Nataliia 
Grygorieva at a meeting of the Committee of National Soci-
eties on May 6th, 2023. As a matter of course, the Ukrainian 
Association of Osteoporosis does not plan to stop on what 
has already been achieved and is actively working on orga-
izing further events for this year’s Osteoporosis Day. Short-
ly, the list of events will be available on the website https://
www.worldosteoporosisdiday.org/events?country=UA&type=
All&year=2023. Using this opportunity, the Ukrainian 
Association of Osteoporosis invites all doctors who work 
with the relevant category of patients to get involved in the 
preparation of this project.

Coming back to the main event of the IOF-ESCEO Con-
gress on Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis and Musculoskeletal 
Diseases — 2023, noteworthy, the Ukrainian Association of 
Osteoporosis did not ignore the shameful fact that Russia, an 
aggressor country, is a member of the Committee of National 
Osteoporosis Societies. President of the Association Profes-
or Nataliia Grygorieva, with the support of other members 
of the Board, sent a letter to the International Osteoporosis 
Foundation for the second time (the first letter was sent im-
mediately after the beginning of the full-scale military in-
vasion of Russia on the territory of Ukraine) regarding the 
exclusion of Russia from the list of CNS member countries. 
During the congress, this letter was considered by the IOF 
management, and a commission was created to study this 
issue, so we hope to receive a positive decision shortly.

Wrapping this short review up, on behalf of the Ukrainian 
Association of Osteoporosis, we express our sincere grati-
tude to the International Osteoporosis Foundation for their 
support. During the last 10 years, the International Osteo-
porosis Foundation has annually provided the opportunity 
to participate in the IOF-ESCEO congress on osteoporosis, 
osteoarthritis and musculoskeletal diseases to 20 members 
of the Ukrainian Association, without charging a registra-
tion fee, i.e. free of charge. In 2022 and 2023, the Interna-
tional Osteoporosis Foundation provided an opportunity to 
participate in Congress, without paying the registration fee, 
to an unlimited number of participants from Ukraine. This 
is incredibly valuable for Ukrainian scientists and doctors in 
this war- and difficult time for us.

Summarizing the results of participation in this year’s 
IOF-ESCEO congress on osteoporosis, osteoarthritis and 
musculoskeletal diseases, I would like to congratulate once 
again the members of the Ukrainian Association of Osteo-
porosis, led by its president Professor Nataliia Grygorieva 
with a worthy representation of our country and Ukrainian 
medical science, which goes on functioning at a high level 
even during the Russian-Ukrainian war. With deep gratitude 
to the Armed Forces of Ukraine and faith in Victory, the 
Ukrainian Association of Osteoporosis continues to support 
the image of our scientists in the international arena.

The next IOF-ESCEO World Congress on Osteoporo-
sis, Osteoarthritis and Musculoskeletal Diseases will be held 
in London on April 11–14, 2024, and we hope that more 
Ukrainian doctors and scientists will be able to participate 
actively in it after our VICTORY.

Written by Nataliia Kuprenenko
Конгреси, симпозіуми, школи / Congresses, Symposiums, Schools