

**Symposium title: Cancer screening and prevention in people with intellectual disabilities**

**Submission type:** 90 minute symposium

**Theme:** Equity

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### **Symposium summary**

Subpopulations with limited health skills and more complex health needs, such as people with intellectual disabilities (ID) are potentially underserved by generic cancer prevention and screening policies. This contributes to disparities across the entire cancer spectrum, leading to poorer oncological outcomes and ultimately premature mortality.

Understanding of how to optimize cancer care to people with ID, starting with cancer prevention and screening, is scarce. People with ID are overlooked in population monitoring and routine data (i.e. not identifiable as having an ID), and thus missing in relevant statistics informing policy and practice.

Moreover, people with ID are often excluded from scientific studies due to legal (e.g. difficulties in obtaining informed consent) or methodological issues (e.g. generating unwanted heterogeneity), which limits the development of new scientific knowledge. In this symposium, we will address relevant issues related to cancer and ID, with a specific focus on screening and prevention. First we will introduce the specific relationship between ID and cancer, next, we will give an overview of cancer screening and prevention policies across Europe and their attention for disability groups, and finally we will present a proposal for a collaborative research network to build equitable, disability-inclusive cancer prevention policies.

### Abstract

**Title: European national cancer screening and prevention policies in relation to intellectual disabilities**

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**Background** – The European Union (EU) and all its Member States have committed to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities by ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). Furthermore, the European Commission’s Disability Strategy 2010-2020 underlined the need to reduce barriers to healthcare access for people with (intellectual) disabilities (ID), and EU’s Beating Cancer Plan (2021) specifically addressed cancer-related inequalities between and within Member States. However, there is limited insight into the extent to which people with ID benefit from current cancer screening and prevention policies across the EU.

**Methods** – To systematically identify, and review policies on cancer prevention across the EU and assess if, and the extent to which disabilities, and ID specifically, are addressed.

**Impact on practice** – This activity is currently mapping information on all European countries on their general health system, any population-wide policies and programmes aimed at cancer prevention and screening, and any national action related to cancer and people with ID, relating to legislation, standards, policies, strategies or guidance.

**Discussion** – This completed activity will provide an overview of the current situation across the EU, identify variations among countries and share ideas for policy adjustment and/or further research; these aspects are intended to reduce differentials in cancer prevention and cancer outcomes between people with ID and the general population.