

FEBRUARY 2021 INTERNATIONAL EPILEPSY DAY ACTIVITIES

On International Epilepsy Day in 2017, as the Turkish Chapter of the International League Against Epilepsy, we launched the #LookForEpilepsy awareness campaign for the first time with the unconditional support of UCB Pharma. The #LookForEpilepsy Awareness Campaign aims to raise social awareness that people living with epilepsy can continue their lives, read, work, marry, have children and achieve successful jobs like everyone else. While the campaign was created, purple, the global color for epilepsy, was combined with the glasses icon representing a change of biased perspective. The Purple Glasses icon was used both on the field and on digital platforms to represent epilepsy awareness and everyone was invited to leave their prejudices against epilepsy behind. By extending the timing of our campaign to cover the International Epilepsy Day and the Purple Day, we continue to raise awareness and fight against the prejudices about epilepsy with our unconditional supporter UCB Pharma Turkey.

We have designated the official hashtags of the #EpilepsilcinBak awareness campaign as #EpilepsilçinBak / #LookForEpilepsy. We included the hashtags in all communications conducted by the campaign accounts bilingually in TR/ENG.

While conducting the #LookForEpilepsy awareness campaign in 2020 and 2021, we created different concepts and shared a lot of posts related to the theme throughout the year. #YilOlmuş2020/#InThisYearAndAge in 2020 "There are still people who think that epilepsy is contagious, and that people living with epilepsy cannot get married and work!" Our campaign gained strength with those messages, and prejudices were handled with a witty criticism. In the year 2021 that we are in, with the concept of #WhatDoesItHaveToDoWith, the messages we focus are "#WhatDoesItHaveToDoWith not being able to study, work, become successful in business life, get married or have children, and being contagious!". We draw attention to these matters and explain that people living with epilepsy can live as a part of society like everyone else through our social media posts.

The second wave results reported in 2021 of the Epilepsy Awareness and Perception Research, which was conducted first in 2018, revealed the beneficial results of the steps we have taken in the path of public awareness in the past 3 years, as well as proving once again that a long and challenging journey is required to overcome the prejudices. In the 2018 study, 1 out of every 4 people said, "If I were an employer, I wouldn't want to hire a person living with epilepsy." According to the results of the research repeated this year, 1 out of every 5 people share this opinion (still 12.7 million people). In the 2018 study, 6 out of 10 people did not want their relatives to marry a person living with epilepsy, this rate fell to 4 out of 10 in 2021 (still 20.7 million people). The ratio of those who believed epilepsy to be contagious fell from 8% to 6% (still 3.5 million people).

Although the improvement in these prejudices is pleasing, millions of people still are not aware enough about epilepsy. Prejudices that are the legacy of centuries of misinformation and beliefs, are still an important challenge in the lives of people living with epilepsy. For this reason, we will continue our efforts to increase the awareness of epilepsy in the general public with a sense of determination and responsibility.

We run the #LookForEpilepsy awareness campaign simultaneously on multiple channels with a 360-degree communication approach.

On February 4, 2021, we came together with prominent press members in an online press conference. With the press release we published after the meeting, we got 90 news reports on February 4th and 5th, 2021.

We organized a webinar for epilepsy awareness and informed 4.452 physicians through the broadcast provider's platform.

The ambassador of the #LookForEpilepsy awareness campaign in 2021 was the famous singer Murat Dalkılıç, who is well known and loved by the society.

Artist Murat Dalkılıç, who was diagnosed with epilepsy in childhood and cured, took part in the digital awareness film with the theme "#WhatDoesItHaveToDoWith not being able to work", this film was watched 1.640.000 times. Many celebrities, artists, influencers, physicians, journalists, municipalities and sports clubs have shared the digital film via their social media accounts and supported epilepsy awareness.

As the board of directors of the Turkish Chapter Of International League Against Epilepsy, we prepared a video with the messages of our campaign and our invitation to participate, and shared it on social media. Our video has been watched 9.000 times in total.

*Many social media and digital channels were actively used in our #LookForEpilepsy awareness campaign, with Instagram being the main media channel. A Purple Glasses Instagram filter was designed and presented to social media users, drawing attention to the #WhatDoesItHaveToDoWith discourse, which is the 2021 motto of the campaign. Purple Glasses Instagram filter has been viewed 182.700 times in total. A web page with the theme of #LookForEpilepsy awareness campaign's 2021 motto #WhatDoesItHaveToDoWith was launched, both to manage the internet traffic of the campaign and to gather our efforts and external support regarding the campaign;
<https://www.epilepsiicinbak.com/ne-alakasi-var>*

Traditional media channels such as radio, newspapers and magazines also have an important role in the reach of our campaign. A series of articles including information on epilepsy and up-to-date data from the Epilepsy Awareness and Perception Research was published in Sabah Newspaper. 5.824.466 reach and advertisement equivalent of 636.720 TL were obtained with the news reflections solely in the print media. We had chance to give our campaign messages for a total of 109 minutes in epilepsy-themed broadcasts on many radio channels such as TRT Radio, Açık Radio, Sputnik Radio and Radio Karadeniz. #LookForEpilepsy campaign messages were featured and special interviews were made in many channels and programs such as NTV, Fox TV Çalar Saat, ATV Breakfast News, Fox TV Benden Söylemesi, Kanal 24. One of Turkey's best-known TV series "Çukur", aired on Show TV, utilizes graffiti in its episodes to give social messages. Our epilepsy and marriage-themed messages, which were also featured in the series script, were featured as graffiti and reached millions of television viewers. The approximate commercial equivalent of TV news and appearances was 757.660 TL. A total of 645 news appearances were obtained through all media communications and collaborations.

At the popular Youtube program with millions of views, "İbrahim Selim ile Bu Gece Show", the program crew supported our awareness campaign by wearing purple glasses. The episode where purple glasses were worn, was watched by 1.4 million people.

A video consisting of the epilepsy awareness messages of our campaign ambassador Murat Dalkılıç was broadcast on the TV screens of the public transportation vehicles in Istanbul, used by millions of people every day. With the campaign video that was on the screens of buses, metrobuses, subways and ferries for 24 hours, people using public transportation were invited to awareness. The video reached 4 million people across 8.500 screens.

On the evening of International Epilepsy Day on February 8th 2021, Fatih Sultan Mehmet and Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridges, two of the symbols of Istanbul, were illuminated with purple neon lights to represent epilepsy awareness.

At the football game between Turkey's two major football clubs Besiktas and Konyaspor, players from both teams came to the field wearing the purple glasses that are the icon of our campaign. At the same time, the announcer of the football competition shared the messages about epilepsy awareness, thanks to this voluntary support we received, our campaign had a wide coverage in the press, and our messages reached approximately 3 million people who are purely subscribers of broadcasters. Also in the Turkey Cup game played in Konya, our banner "Be aware, Support, Look For Epilepsy!" took place in the stands.

Another important football club, Trabzonspor, with its voluntary support this year, shot a special video for the #LookForEpilepsy awareness campaign and published it on its social media accounts. Famous football players' messages themed "#WhatDoesItHaveToDoWith" and "#LookForEpilepsy" attracted great attention from social media users. The awareness video was watched by more than 500.000 people on the official accounts of the club and received thousands of interactions.

Turkish Basketball Federation in both women and men's category, voluntarily supported our campaign by posting messages on LED screens in all the top leagues' games. Besides, with the federation's initiative, our awareness messages took their place on LED screens at the Turkish National Basketball Team's games against Croatia and Switzerland.

Datça, Marmaris, Erzurum, Çanakkale, Ataşehir, Sarıyer Municipalities and many others on Twitter shared their awareness messages about epilepsy and supported #LookForEpilepsy. The potential reach of the Twitter channel was 27.122.423

Marriage preparations platform Düğün.com, which is visited by couples entering the marriage process, supported our campaign with the message "2 out of 5 people do not want their relatives to marry a person living with epilepsy" from their social media accounts.

A cooperation was performed with Turkey's largest employer platform, Kariyer.net. To handle "employment" as one of the main messages of the 5th year campaign, 23.900 HR employee in Turkey were reached by a mailing prepared with epilepsy awareness messages. In addition, posts regarding our campaign were published on Kariyer.net blog site. Finally, within the scope of Purple Day events, we will hold a seminar on epilepsy for employers and employees on the Kariyer.net platform, and we will highlight our messages about awareness against the prejudices about the work and productivity of the people living with epilepsy.

Furthermore, within the scope of Purple Day, 26 March 2021, Galata Tower, one of the symbolic structures of Istanbul, will be illuminated with purple light thanks to the voluntary support of the Association of Foundations of the Directorate of Culture and Tourism. With these efforts, which will be supported by a press release, we expect an additional visibility in the media.

We prioritize the sustainability of our efforts in order to spread the awareness of epilepsy and to eliminate the prejudices faced by people living with epilepsy... Even though we take many awareness steps for this reason, your contribution will always add value.

If you'd like to support our #LookForEpilepsy awareness campaign, you can use the #PurpleGlasses filter on the @epilepsiicinbak Instagram profile to take your photos, share your awareness messages and publish them using the hashtags #EpilepsiicinBak #LookForEpilepsy and #WhatDoesItHaveToDoWith.

Hope to see each other on healthy and unprejudiced days...