

## **Pulmonary fibrosis patients should be given priority in COVID-19 vaccination programmes: A Joint Statement**

The European Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis & Related Disorders Federation (EU-IPFF) and the European Reference Network on Rare Respiratory Diseases (ERN-Lung) represent interstitial lung disease (ILD) patients across Europe, including those with the subtype of lung scarring diseases, pulmonary fibrosis, and health care professionals across Europe.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on people and health systems. Now that vaccines are becoming available, it is important that governments and healthcare systems give priority to the most vulnerable citizens and vaccinate them as soon as possible.

Patients living with interstitial lung diseases and with pulmonary fibrosis, in particular, are among the most vulnerable and highest risk populations during this health crisis. Recent research shows they are 60% more likely to die if hospitalised with COVID-19 than their peers<sup>1</sup>. They should therefore be given priority within the roll out of national vaccination programmes.

We therefore welcome the fact that many governments recognise the vulnerability of pulmonary fibrosis patients and **we call on governments across Europe to give priority access to COVID-19 vaccination programmes to patients living with interstitial lung diseases and especially those with pulmonary fibrosis.**

The UK, Public Health England (PHE) recently released [provisional guidance for the use of the COVID-19 vaccines](#)<sup>2</sup> to protect those who are at highest risk from serious illness and death. In that guidance, Chapter 14a explicitly lists patients with "interstitial lung fibrosis" as "clinical risk groups .....who should be offered COVID-19 immunisation". Similar recommendations have been made in other countries.

**We therefore urge that governments across Europe recognise the higher risk of mortality faced by interstitial lung disease patients, especially pulmonary fibrosis patients, and give them priority within COVID-19 vaccination programmes.**

### **Signatories**



Steve Jones



Dr Anne-Marie Russell



Prof. Dr Michael Kreuter

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.atsjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1164/rccm.202007-2794OC>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-the-green-book-chapter-14a>



Respiratory Diseases  
(ERN-LUNG)

President, EU-IPFF

Chair, Scientific Advisory  
Board, EU-IPFF

ERN-Lung (ILD Network)

## Signatories & Co-signatories

### EU-IPFF Executive Board Members

- Steve Jones, Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis, **United Kingdom**
- Liam Galvin, Irish Lung Fibrosis Association, **Ireland**
- Jean Michelle Fourrier, APEFPI Fibrose Pulmonaire Idiopathique, **France**
- Ralph van Lysebeth, Belgische vereniging voor longfibrose, **Belgium**
- Klaus Geißler, Lungenfibrose e.V. **Germany**
- Stefano Pavanello, Unione Trapianti Polmone Di Padova, **Italy**
- Radostina Getova, IPF Bulgaria, **Bulgaria**

### EU-IPFF Scientific Advisory Board Chair and Vice-Chair

- Dr. Anne-Marie Russell, Imperial College London, **United Kingdom**
- Dr. Francesco Bonella, Ruhrlandklinik Medical Faculty, Duisburg-Essen University, **Germany**

### ERN-Lung ILD Core Network Co-Chairs

- Dr. Antje Prasse, Hannover School of Medicine, **Germany**
- Prof. Michael Kreuter, University of Heidelberg, **Germany**

### ERN-Lung Chair of Cross-Border Education

- Dr Marlies Wijssenbeek, Erasmus University Medical Centre, Rotterdam, **Netherlands**



Respiratory Diseases  
(ERN-LUNG)

### **About the EU-IPFF**

The European Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis and Related Disorders Federation (EU-IPFF) is a non-profit organization that brings together European national patient associations committed to defending their vision of equal access to treatment and care for all pulmonary fibrosis (PF) patients, regardless of geography, ethnicity, socio-economic status or age.

More information [www.eu-ipff.org](http://www.eu-ipff.org) Contact EU-IPFF Secretariat, [secretariat@eu-ipff.org](mailto:secretariat@eu-ipff.org)

### **About the ERN-Lung**

ERN-Lung is a patient-centric network of European health care providers and patient organisations, committed Europe-wide and globally to reducing morbidity and mortality from rare lung diseases in people of all ages through patient care, advocacy, education, research and knowledge sharing.

More information [www.ern-lung.eu](http://www.ern-lung.eu)