

***Interview with Charel Trierweiler, founder member of ALGSO, the Luxembourg association of oncologic physical therapy groups.***

Charel Trierweiler is founder member of ALGSO, the Luxembourg association of oncologic physical therapy groups, which specializes in the rehabilitation of cancer sufferers. The association was founded in 2009.

Charel's background includes a Master's in Sports Science. His thesis was about the effects of physical exercise as a therapy within a hospital environment. He was able to count on the support of Dr Freerk Baumann, top of the field in research in oncologic movement medicine at the integrated cancer center at the University of Sports in Cologne.

Charel started studying the role of sports as preventive therapy. He advocates doing 300 minutes of sport a week, which diminishes the risk of getting cancer. The more intense the exercise is, the more the time can be reduced, so 45 minutes of light sport is about the same as 25 minutes of running. The best formula is a mix of muscle toning and cardio training.

Preparing his thesis in Luxembourg, Charel was supported by Dr Caroline Duhem at CHL, where he monitored 25 patients, in order to establish a link between physical exercise and well-being. His research found that at a physical level patients benefitted from the therapy, had more strength, felt less tired, and were better able to bear the negative side effects of treatment.

Psychologically patients felt less scared, less stressed and simply felt better overall. Socially they made contact with other patients during psychotherapy, and therefore felt less isolated.

Consequently, Charel could demonstrate that therapy based on physical exercise within a hospital environment has positive effects and diminishes the risk of the recurrence of cancer.

In 2008, he started working at CHL (Centre Hospitalier du Luxembourg) in the physiotherapy department. He accompanied patients doing sports therapy. The CNS covers all the associated costs at hospital for cancer patients.

But Charel above all was concerned by the question: “What will happen following physiotherapy in hospital?” He recognized that there was a real need.

It was found that once patients left hospital, they missed doing sport in small groups, monitored by a person who knew them, and aware of their medical history. These people felt comfortable in their group, and knew their therapist very well. In addition, lots of them made friends, with others who were in a similar situation.

Charel went on to participate in sports groups in Germany, and eventually open groups in Luxembourg for patients who had left hospital. He got in contact with the Lions Clubs to present his project about sports groups. Thanks to Dr Marc Diederich he was able to found ALGSO.

By 2009, there were two such groups, and today there are 13, all conducted by sports therapists, who are paid by ALGSO. There are six members in the ALGSO committee, of which Charel is the president. The board collaborates with a pool of sports therapists.

In the Luxembourg Foundation of Health Sports Associations, FLASS, you will find all the different groups, with their diverse diseases. Flass encourages people suffering chronic diseases to take part in therapeutic physical activities in order to reduce the risk of recurrence and/or to give them a better quality of life.

But how can one succeed in motivating a person to participate in a sports group? This is mostly down to the patient’s doctor, who, when convinced about the positive effects of sports, will explain the results of surveys to his patients to encourage and motivate them to take part.

Once people start to participate, they are able to advance at their own rhythm. Every training session is adapted to the patient’s situation. Charel explains that these sports groups are often the springboard which will help people to resume the sport they used to do before they became ill, such as dance courses, fitness training, and so on.

Go to [www.sportifsoncologiques.lu](http://www.sportifsoncologiques.lu) where there is lots more information. The membership of ALGSO costs 20€, and this includes being able to attend a sports group of one’s choice.

Charel finds it important to have a good work-life balance. Today he is a sports teacher at the Lycée Technique du Centre, and committee president of ALGSO.

Charel, thank you for your commitment, and your tenacity.



Photo © ALGSO Stand at the Broschkriibslaf 2022 in Hesperange.

***The interview was conducted by Ms. Françoise Hetto-Gaasch, member of the committee of Europa Donna Luxembourg.***

**Europa Donna Luxembourg Asbl**  
1b rue Thomas Edison L-1445 Strassen  
Tél. : 621 47 83 94  
E-mail : [europadonna@pt.lu](mailto:europadonna@pt.lu)  
[www.europadonna.lu](http://www.europadonna.lu)