Building on the successes of 2016, GAfPA’s reach expanded across Europe and Latin American in 2017. GAfPA worked to educate, empower and mobilise patient representative and clinicians, equipping them with a range of educational materials such as videos, infographics and policy papers.

Examples of 2017 educational materials produced by GAfPA include:

- A Spanish-language explainer video on non-medical switching
- A “Fast Facts” policy paper on pharmacovigilance
- A “Fast Facts” policy paper on non-medical switching
- An infographic on chronic pain in Europe.

With the help of these materials, GAfPA drove consensus and raised key issues with policymakers at the local, regional, national and international level.

Across Europe and Latin America, GAfPA remained consistent with core values: informed consent, patient choice, shared decision-making and - above all - patient access.
IN EUROPE IN 2017, GAFPA HAS:

- Delivered four regional advocacy workshops with support of partners, including EFCCA and AGORA
- Coordinated a successful advocacy workshop at the Societal Impact of Pain annual conference in Malta
- Attended and presented informative posters at large medical congresses such as EADV and UEG Week
- Met EU Commission officials and MEPs
- Published blog posts, meeting reports and policy papers
- Secured media coverage in respected outlets such as the PinkSheet and PMLive
- Built the network of physicians and patient advocates.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Through advocacy workshops and attendance at major medical congresses in Europe, GAFPA successfully developed new connections with patient advocates and physicians from a range of therapy areas across the continent. For example, GAFPA presented at the biannual meeting of the European Pain Federation, EFIC, in Copenhagen in September.

Strong relationships are invaluable to helping GAFPA members understand the unique policy situation of each European country. Attending high-level meetings in the European Parliament is also important in this regard, with GAFPA attending the European Patients’ Rights Day and events on Access to Healthcare hosted by the European Patients Forum. This year, GAFPA successfully communicated key issues and workshop highlights with policymakers and officials. For example, GAFPA representatives met with the Chief Medical Officer of Malta at the Ministry of Health, and MEPs and Commission officials in Brussels.

EARNED MEDIA

GAFPA, with support from our network of physicians and patient advocates, continued its effort toward ensuring the patient voice around biologic and biosimilar medicines is heard in the media coverage of the issue. This year, GAFPA’s work and views received fantastic exposure, which helped increase awareness of patients’ views and raised GAFPA’s profile as an organisation.

Coverage included:

- ‘Facing the new wave of biosimilars: don’t drown out the patient voice’ (PMLive)
- ‘Non-Medical Switching’ (PinkSheet)
- ‘New biosimilar switching paper prioritizes physician-patient relationship and robust pharmacovigilance’
- ‘Clinical judgement first, value proposition second: drugmakers issue joint global position paper on biosimilar switching’.

RESOURCES

Over the course of the year, the policy landscape for biologics and biosimilars rapidly changed. As of May 2017, there were 28 biosimilars approved for use in Europe with 17 biologics with biosimilars in the pipeline. Alongside the reports and best practice case studies gathered at regional meetings, GAFPA continued its work in informing patient advocates of the most important policy developments in an accessible way.
MEDICAL CONGRESSSES

GAfPA attended several medical congresses this year, including the European Crohn’s and Colitis Organisation’s annual conference in Barcelona in February, the European Society for Medical Oncology’s annual congress in Madrid in September and the European League Against Rheumatism’s annual congress in Madrid in June, where GAfPA held a successful meeting with patient advocates.

**Societal Impact of Pain Conference, July**

Under the auspices of the 2017 Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU, Malta hosted this year’s Societal Impact of Pain conference. GAfPA presented an advocacy workshop for more than 30 delegates that featured presentations from the heads of the European Pain Federation, Active Citizenship Network and Pain Alliance Europe.

**European Pain Federation**

GAfPA had the opportunity to outline important policy developments for pain management for patients in Europe at EFIC 2017 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

**European Society of Medical Oncology, September**

GAfPA participated in patient advocacy events at ESMO 2017 in Madrid, Spain. Each year, ESMO creates an environment where cancer researchers, clinicians and patient advocates can come together to collaborate and exchange ideas.

**EADV, September**

In September, GAfPA travelled to Geneva, Switzerland for the European Academy of Dermatology and Venerology’s annual congress. GAfPA had a place in the Patient Society Village and was pleased to attend a patient group event on the future of dermatology.

**UEG week, October**

GAfPA presented ‘Biologics and Biosimilars – What Matters for Physicians?’ at UEG Week. This research found that physicians prioritise the safety of the patient above cost considerations in making a decision over whether or not to switch a patient from their medication. Delegates at UEG week asked insightful questions about the poster, and outlets across Europe received a press release detailing the findings.

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**Biologics and Biosimilars: What Matters to Physicians?**

**METHODS**

- **Survey Participants**: UK (20%), Spain (18%), UK (16%), France (15%), Italy (14%), and Spain (13%).
- **Medical Specialties**: Neurology (16%), Endocrinology (15%), Rheumatology (15%), and Oncology (14%).

**RESULTS**

- **Safety and Efficacy**: 88% of Physicians responded that they were very comfortable with switching patients between biologic and biosimilar therapies.
- **Confidence**: 67% of Physicians were somewhat confident in government-run pharmacovigilance systems in informing physicians of pertinent pharmaceutical information.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Physicians do not completely trust government-run pharmacovigilance systems.
- The safety and efficacy of biologic and biosimilar medicines is paramount importance to physicians when it comes to switching.
- Biologic and biosimilar medicines are important to physicians when it comes to switching.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & DISCLOSURES**

- **Data Sources**: This data was generated from a SERMO Poll. SERMO is the largest patient advocacy organization in the UK.
- **Disclosures**: GAfPA has no conflicts to disclose. Dr. Charles receives income from Merz, Intec, Medtronic, Lundbeck, USWorldmeds, Boston Scientific, and St. Jude for research or educational programs led by Dr. Charles.
- **Vanderbilt University Medical Center**: Receives income from Allergan, Ipsen, and Revance for consulting services. Ms. Molinari and Dr. Bonilla have no research or educational programs led by Dr. Charles.
GAFPA-AGORA CONFERENCE
BUDAPEST

GAfPA and the Platform of Organisations of People with Rheumatic Diseases in Southern Europe, AGORA, began the year in Budapest by delivering a workshop for patient advocates representing groups that primarily focus on rheumatic diseases. Attendees at this workshop signed on to five consensus principles on biologic and biosimilar medicines, as noted in the full report.

GAFPA-EFCCA WORKSHOP
MUNICH

In May, 17 attendees from 13 different countries representing specialities from across rheumatology, gastroenterology and neurology, convened to discuss their experiences advocating on biologics and biosimilars. The workshop encouraged best-practice sharing amongst attendees, the results of which were written up for use by other groups. GAfPA produced a blog post on the event, as well as a full report for distribution among advocates.

GAFPA-EFCCA WORKSHOP
WARSAW

GAfPA and EFCCA held a patient advocacy workshop in Warsaw in September that focused on organisations from across Eastern Europe sharing their experiences of advocating on biologics and biosimilars. Representatives from 15 patient advocacy organisations and two physicians attended and shared advocacy examples such as joint group position papers on biosimilars. An overview and findings were compiled in a report.

GAFPA- EFCCA WORKSHOP
ROME

The final GAfPA and EFCCA advocacy best practice workshop was held in Rome, with 17 patient delegates from nine different countries representing specialties from across rheumatology and gastroenterology. The workshop discussion encouraged attendees to share their experiences with biologics and biosimilars in their own countries as well as the advocacy techniques they have already undertaken around this policy area. GAfPA produced a full report of the event.
Fragmented health systems and a high level of inequality and have resulted in access challenges for people across much of Latin America. GAfPA worked to support decision makers and interest groups in improving the design and execution of public policies and regulations that guarantee greater equity, security and opportunity in access.

Following the success realized with the 2015 Biologics and Biosimilar Regulations meeting in Buenos Aires, GAfPA continued to strengthen its presence through working with leaders in the region, participating in important meetings and forums, and contributing with the formulation of proposals on how to work better at the multisectoral level.

Since GAfPA began working in the Latin America, it has established solid bases of collaboration with medical societies and patient organizations. That collaboration has allowed for the implementation of capacity building programs with leaders from different therapeutic areas, including oncology, rheumatology, psoriasis, rare diseases, prematurity, and NCDs and autoimmune diseases.
This year GAfPA established several workstreams with different networks of patient organizations and medical societies:

**Costa Rica**
GAfPA presented a workshop at the BIORED CAC meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica. Patient advocates from across Central America received trainings on developing effective advocacy campaigns to ensure informed policymaking.

**Argentina and Uruguay**
In Argentina and Uruguay, GAfPA worked closely with the BIORED Del Sur, FUNSALUD and the Uruguayan Patients Forum.

**Peru**
BioRed of Peru was established and educational materials were distributed to attendees to support their advocacy activities.

**Colombia**
Following the biosimilar workshop in 2016 where representatives signed the GAfPA declaration of principles for access to biotechnological medicines, GAfPA worked in Colombia to support the formation of a Bio Network. GAfPA continues to adapt educational materials that will serve to strengthen groups in pharmacovigilance and regulations.

**Brazil**
In Brazil, GAfPA worked with leaders and authorities to support the improvement of the capacities of patient groups, networks and with BIORED BRAZIL together with the Senate and the National Health Council on regulatory issues and non-medical change.

**Conclusion**
In 2018, GAfPA will build upon the work of 2017 by:

- Holding more regional advocacy workshops to share best practices
- Building GAfPA’s network of patient advocates, physicians and partners
- Developing relevant briefings and materials
- Expanding GAfPA’s presence at key medical congresses and in Brussels.

GAfPA brought together prominent experts, leaders and advocates from the region in 2017. GAfPA plans to continue developing educational materials, training and empowerment programs for physicians and patients in 2018.
The Global Alliance for Patient Access (GAfPA) is a network of physicians and patient advocates with the shared mission of promoting health policy that ensures patient access to appropriate clinical care and approved therapies. GAfPA accomplishes this mission through educating physicians and patients on health policy issues and developing education material and advocacy initiatives to promote informed policymaking.

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