



ABC Conference Special Edition (ABC6.5) - IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

After careful consideration of the current worldwide pandemic situation, **the ABC Global Alliance Board of Directors took the difficult decision to cancel the special edition of the ABC conference (ABC6.5)** that was due to take place in Lisbon in November 2022. The main objective of this special event was to meet face-to-face, since our last conference was fully virtual and we all miss the direct interaction and networking.

We have taken this decision due to the ongoing uncertainty related to the pandemic. The current inequalities in the access to COVID-19 vaccines and continuous emergence of new variants, make it extremely difficult to predict how the situation will be in November, and we thought not to put at risk of Covid-19 all our conference attendees, and in particular our patient advocates from around the world, many of whom are living with ABC and as such are among the highest risk groups for Covid-19 infection.

We acknowledge that over the past year the rollout of Covid-19 vaccines has been highly successful in protecting people from severe infection, hospitalisation and death, however the vast majority of these vaccines have been administered in high- and upper-middle-income countries and sadly many of our patient advocates and healthcare professional attendees live in countries where the virus is moving faster than the distribution of vaccines to their country.

The goal of the ABC Global Alliance is always to improve and extend the lives of women and men living with ABC in all countries worldwide, and to raise awareness of the issues facing ABC patients. Vaccine equity is one such issue, because no-one is safe from Covid-19 until everyone is safe.

We are very much looking forward to meeting again face-to-face and come together as a global community at **ABC7 in Lisbon 9-11 November 2023**. We are currently working on developing a high-quality and exciting program for ABC 7, where the ABC guidelines will be once again updated.

But to be able meet again in person safely for all participants we need to achieve vaccine equity around the world. The current tragic events in Ukraine and the associated economic crisis will for certain increase the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the inequalities in access to health care worldwide.

We would like to invite you to join us in calling on leading nations to meet the commitments that they have made on vaccine distribution to all by signing this open letter to G20 leaders <https://www.who.int/campaigns/vaccine-equity/vaccine-commitments-open-letter>

Fatima Cardoso, on behalf of the ABC Global Alliance Board of Directors