Introduction:
- Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) is a severe, progressive lung disease of unknown aetiology¹
- It is the most common interstitial lung disease (ILD)² with typical symptoms including reduced exercise capacity, dyspnoea and hypoxaemia³
- The disease prognosis is poor with median survival ranging from 2.5–3.5 years⁴
- A recent Cochrane review recommends exercise as being a standard component of care for individuals with IPF⁵
- Exercise in the form of Pulmonary Rehabilitation (PR) is often prescribed
- Unfortunately Irish PR programmes often do not address IPF patient specific needs such as limited mobility, high oxygen requirements, extreme fatigue, lower intensity and longer duration classes³

Aims:
- The Irish Lung Fibrosis Association (ILFA) and the physiotherapy department at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital (MMUH) collaborated to develop disease specific educational and exercise resources to support patients with IPF

Methods:
ILFA 2000 Steps a Day Challenge:
- In 2013, a tailored motivational walking programme was developed and trialed by patients
- The premise of this novel home-based exercise programme was for each patient to establish their baseline daily step count and to gradually incorporate an additional 2000 steps (approx. 1.5 kilometres) into their daily routine
- The step count could be accumulated throughout the day to suit the patient’s lifestyle and symptoms
- The 2000 Steps a Day pack included a pedometer, literature on the benefits of walking, an exercise diary, and a contract regarding exercise commitment

Exercise DVD:
- In 2015, a tailored information and exercise DVD was developed featuring healthcare professionals and individuals with IPF
- This provides information on symptom management and how to complete a home exercise programme safely and independently

Outcomes:
- The 2000 Steps a Day Challenge and the ILFA Exercise DVD provide education on symptom management and how to exercise safely at home
- The 2000 Steps a Day Challenge won the 2013 Irish Healthcare Award for Best Health Promotion Project
- For the IPF pre-transplant population the exercise DVD and the 2000 Steps a Day Challenge is recommended to maintain fitness and exercise tolerance
- To date more than 500 exercise DVDs have been distributed to patients and healthcare professionals nationally

Conclusion:
- The partnership initiatives described combined the expertise and specialist knowledge of physiotherapists with the expertise of a patient organisation to deliver medically accurate information that addresses the unmet needs and treatment priorities of a vulnerable population
- The exercise resources have been warmly received by the patients and are being distributed by healthcare professionals in hospitals and respiratory clinics nationally

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- Roche Products Ireland and Boehringer Ingelheim helped support the production costs for the exercise resources

References: