



DIGESTIVE CANCERS
EUROPE

DiCE Social Media Toolkit

Using Biosimilars Awareness Week as a Training Example

About This Toolkit

This toolkit has been developed in the context of the Biosimilar Education in Metastatic Colorectal Cancer project. The toolkit serves as a communication guide to support you in being active on social media and interacting with your national digestive cancer community on different topics including that of biosimilar medicines. A good moment to get involved in is during Biosimilars Week in November.

The toolkit explains the importance of using social media, and includes practical examples of how to plan, conduct, and track a successful social media campaign.

The Added Value of Social Media

In today's society, social media represent an opportunity to effectively reach large audiences of either a political or non-political nature. According to Eurostat, **56% of people aged 16-74 used social networks in 2018**.¹ For this reason, engaging with stakeholders on social media can be fruitful for making your audience more aware of who you are and what you do, promoting events, disseminating publications, growing your community and so on. The right approach with the right "tag(s)" allows you to spread messages to thousands of people. Do not forget that coordinated actions will always amplify the effect of the activity or campaign you are part of.

The most used social media platforms are:



Twitter Facebook Instagram LinkedIn



The Social Media tool(s) you should use is(are) highly dependent on the type of audience you want to target.

Key European health-focused Twitter accounts:

@EU_Health

76.9 K followers

the European Commission's Directorate General for Health & Food Safety, also known as **DG SANTE**

@MAC_MEPs

2.5 K followers

a cross-party group of **MEPs Against Cancer** in the European Parliament

@myESMO

49 K followers

the **European Society for Medical Oncology**, which supports oncology professionals in providing cancer patients with the most effective treatment and care

@my_ueg

11.8 K followers

the **United European Gastroenterology**, a professional non-profit organisation combining all the leading European medical specialist and national societies focusing on digestive health

Make sure to follow DiCE's social media accounts regularly to learn more about key stakeholders and interact with the patient community.



Facebook: @dicehq

Twitter: @dice_europe

LinkedIn: Digestive Cancers Europe

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20190629-1>

About DiCE's Biosimilar Education in Metastatic Colorectal Cancer Project

Over recent years, DiCE has organised several initiatives on biosimilars to provide educational resources for patients and healthcare professionals and, ultimately, strengthen knowledge on the topic.

In 2019, DiCE developed a **Position Paper** that explains the important role biosimilars play in colorectal cancer treatment. Building on this essential document, DiCE invited European experts in the field of biosimilars to collaborate on a project that aims to improve knowledge and education about biological medicines in Europe.

The group of experts identified the main barriers to biosimilar acceptance and jointly developed various educational tools on biosimilars:



- A patient brochure about biosimilars for patients with colorectal cancer
- A checklist for healthcare professionals with questions that colorectal cancer patients may have around biosimilars
- Two short lunchtime presentations for healthcare professionals around basic biosimilar concepts
- A podcast on biosimilars
- A short video to support biosimilar communication between patients and clinicians

Given the crucial role of European policies in addressing specific challenges of biosimilars, DiCE engaged with Members of the European Parliament to:



- Share expert knowledge on how to tackle the main barriers that prevent biological medicines – including biosimilars – from being widely accessible to European patients
- Promote the development of the educational materials at policy level
- Organise a policy event on the topic of biosimilars

Read more about the project [here](#).

How Can You Contribute?

We need all of our multidisciplinary communities involved in the Biosimilar Education in Metastatic Colorectal Cancer project for it to succeed. By participating in this social media campaign – and using this toolkit for future media outreach – you're helping spread the word!

Campaign Goals:



Raise awareness

of the value of biosimilars among patients, healthcare professionals and policymakers



Involve

national stakeholders in national and/or European campaign(s) by enhancing their knowledge on how to conduct/interact with social media campaigns



Promote

educational materials on biosimilars for patients and healthcare professionals developed by experts and DiCE

Step-by-Step Guide on How to Engage with Different Stakeholders on Social Media

Some general rules

- To be effective on social media, you need to follow and consult websites and relevant social media stakeholders, such as national cancer patient organisations, on a weekly basis. It is also highly recommended to follow individual patients that are active advocates.
- Create a list of challenges/issues specific to your country that align with the above-mentioned key messages. This can be used to better tailor your communication strategy.
- Make use of your personal networks to increase engagement and spread key messages.
- Use hashtags within your messages. Hashtags are words preceded by a #, used on social media to identify digital content on a specific topic. Hashtags enable social media users to (1) create engagement and/or (2) start conversations on specific topics.

You have two options: either jump on an already-used hashtag (i.e. **#biosimilarmedicines**) or create a new hashtag trend (i.e. **#biosimilarsincancertreatment**).

An already-existing trend allows you to join the conversation about a certain topic and boost your social media presence. Creating a new, distinctive hashtag allows you to collect all social media communication on your campaign(s) in one place. Your followers would be able to quickly find the most updated information about your campaign(s).

Examples of **hashtags** to be used for this campaign are:

#biologics **#biosimilarmedicines** **#biosimilareducation** **#biosimilarsincancertreatment** **#GlobalBiosimilarsWeek**

Step 1: How Do You Find Relevant Stakeholders?²



Policymakers

- Use Google search, check your local Parliament and Government websites to find policymakers active in the field of biosimilars and/or digestive cancers, and check their social media accounts.
- Check the attendees/participants and speakers lists of recent related events in your country.
- If there are specific hashtags linked to your cause (e.g. **#biosimilars**), put this hashtag in the search bar of your social media platform and see in the search results if there are any policymakers using these hashtags in their messaging.



Media or individual journalists specialised in healthcare

- Make sure to follow the main news sources on social media and monitor the healthcare sections on their website.
- Once you spot articles related to the sustainability of healthcare systems, (the availability of) cancer care - or even biosimilars - take this opportunity to link their content to your campaign(s) by "tagging" them and/or sharing what they've posted.
- If you cannot find any related output, you could simply contact local media and journalists engaged in healthcare and provide them with more information about your organisation and/or the activities of DiCE.



Healthcare professionals

- Connect on social media with healthcare professionals that are outspoken and passionate about the topic of biosimilars.
- Search on Google for oncologists or other relevant healthcare professionals in your region. Following this step, you can look them up on social media channels to check whether they have recently posted anything matching the key messages of the campaign.
- Check the attendees/participants and speakers lists of recent related events in your country.
- Look up articles/publications dedicated to biosimilars or biological cancer treatment in national/pan-European cancer journals, for example: Annals of Oncology, ESMO Open, and again search for these groups/individuals on social media to see if you can connect.

² This step guide can be followed using any other key term of interest to your organisation.

Step 2: How Do You Engage With These Stakeholders?

Once you have stakeholders that you want to target, there are a few ways to engage with them:

- 👤 **Tagging:** tagging means mentioning a person's name in order to link them to a certain message, after which that person receives a notification that they have been tagged by another social media user. Tag them by preceding their social media account name with their "handle", which is represented by the *at* symbol (@). This usually happens at the end of the post. This way, the tagged person can decide whether to like or share your post on their own account.
- ➔ **Responding:** you can write a comment in response to relevant posts stakeholders have recently created, typically by typing in an open comment box below the original post.
- 🔄 **Reposting:** if you endorse someone's opinion/message/post, you can also decide to repost it on your own platform (simply click the repost or share button). This can be done with or without adding a comment.
- 💬 **Proactively asking for social media support:** contact others via email/phone and ask them to support the campaign through social media activity.

Step 3: What Do You Post on Social Media?



Best Practice Tips

- **Adapt your content and approach to** the social media you are using – although aligned, your messages on Facebook shouldn't be the same as those on Twitter or LinkedIn.

f **Facebook** is a platform mostly used by people to connect with family and friends; its demographic ranges from teenagers to people above 65 years – however, over the recent years it has become the most popular network among seniors. The platform provides certain flexibility on the length of your messages (compared to Twitter); you should use it to make your posts **engaging** and **thought-provoking**. **Ask questions to start conversations in the comments section.**

🐦 **Twitter** is used to get the most updated **information**. With a limit of **280 characters**, the platform allows you to **create only short messages/posts called "tweets"**. As Twitter is mainly used to share real-time updates, your audience can consist of various actors: alongside patients, your target audience can include clinicians, policymakers, journalists, and other organisations. Include appropriate hashtags and handles in your posts and ensure their visibility.

in **LinkedIn** is a platform gathering professional communities. Make sure that your LinkedIn **messages are informative and news-oriented**.

- Target your tone, message and content to the desired audience. If multiple audiences can be targeted, do not hesitate to create several posts on the same subject. Keep in mind the extent of knowledge about biosimilars among your audience and emphasise the information most relevant for them.
- **Make use of visual messaging** by posting photos or videos. Visual tools can make your post more interesting, relatable and can increase interaction.
- **Encourage engagement** with posts by asking or answering questions.
- **Aim to publish on a regular basis.** Create posts ahead of time and schedule their publication date. There are many online tools that help with this process, such as [Hootsuite](#).
- Check social media every day or at least every few days. Even if posts are scheduled, this step should not be forgotten, as it is important to dynamically engage with stakeholders.
- Always proofread and double-check content before posting.
- Track which posts receive more likes, shares, and comments. Certain social media platforms already offer analytics, but you can use many other online tools for this purpose. Identify what works best for your audience and tailor future posts.

Adding Factual Content: Key Messages From the Expert Group

Sharing educational materials and showing their importance can be reinforced by including key messages in social media posts. You could consider including the following elements (remembering to adapt them to your specific message and platform!) in your social media strategy, all of which have been agreed upon by the expert group:

1. **Biosimilars** are biological medicines that have **the same active substance and the same indication as the originator**. Biosimilars match their originators in terms of **quality, safety and efficacy**.
2. Being a concept still unfamiliar to many cancer patients, **education, communication and policy actions are key in overcoming barriers to biosimilar acceptance**.
3. **Biosimilars are as safe and effective as their originators** – they comply with the same strict regulatory requirements applied to all biological medicines.
4. The availability of biosimilars for treating cancer patients offers several advantages for the patient community and society: biosimilars can contribute to **more sustainable and affordable healthcare systems**.
5. The use of biosimilars offers the opportunity to **increase access to biological treatments**, reduce patients' waiting time to be treated, and fund new, innovative treatments.
6. Healthcare professionals should use **simple, easy-to-understand language** towards patients when talking about biosimilars. Patient understanding of their treatment options is crucial.
7. Patients should always be provided with **trustworthy information/tools** on biosimilars. Examples include **DiCE's information brochure** for patients with colorectal cancer and **Biosimilar Medicines Information for Patients: What I need to know about biosimilar medicines**, a document by the European Commission translated to all EU languages .

Sample Posts:



Twitter:

Have you heard? The first #biosimilar was approved 15 years ago – and now we have over 70 #ECapproved biosimilars to make treatment more #sustainable and #affordable – read more here: [insert link to your website, a publication, etc]



Facebook:

Have you heard? The first #biosimilar was approved 15 years ago – and now we have over 70 #ECapproved biosimilars to make treatment more sustainable and affordable! But, biosimilars are still unfamiliar to many cancer patients, limiting their acceptance, despite being as safe and effective as their originators. Do you have any questions about biosimilars? Leave them in the comments below and we'll answer them! [include a relevant photo to draw attention to the post]



LinkedIn:

Have you heard? The first #biosimilar was approved 15 years ago – and now we have over 70 #ECapproved biosimilars to make treatment more sustainable and affordable! But, biosimilars are still unfamiliar to many cancer patients, limiting their acceptance, despite being as safe and effective as their originators. In fact, they comply with all of the same regulatory requirements, and contribute to increased access to care. For more information, Digestive Cancers Europe (DiCE) has created a comprehensive position paper on the use of biosimilars [include a link to the Position Paper]. For more information, click here [insert link to your website, a publication, etc]

A Great Opportunity to Engage: Global Biosimilars Week 2021, 1-5 November

On 16–20 November 2020, the International Generic and Biosimilar medicines Association (IGBA) launched the first Global Biosimilars Week, inviting every stakeholder to join the conversation around biosimilars. The goal of the campaign was to engage in a globally aligned educational initiative to raise awareness about biosimilars through resource sharing. As a global initiative, the 2020 Biosimilars week gathered 17 member associations, with Medicines for Europe driving the initiative at the European level.

DiCE joined the campaign and shared with its audience the [Position Paper](#) on the use of biosimilars.

Learn more about the campaign through visiting this website: <https://www.globalbiosimilarsweek.org/>

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www.digestivecancers.eu