



Meningitis in Galicia: from disaster to success

To celebrate World Meningitis Day 2024, the [Spanish Association Against Meningitis \(AEM\)](#) created a documentary about an outbreak in the Galicia region 50 years earlier. The documentary explains how Galicia went from one of the worst-hit regions of Western Europe to the region with the best meningitis vaccine programme in Spain. It coincides with the recent news that Galicia will invest nearly €3 million in MenB vaccines.



Organisation

Asociación Española
contra la Meningitis (AEM)



Background

Civil society organisation
dedicated to raising
awareness of meningitis
and promoting vaccination



Location

Spain

Inspiration

Beatriz García-Risco Fernández, AEM Communications Manager, came up with the idea after talking about how Galicia was devastated by meningitis in the 1970s and 80s. Meningitis left a deep mark on the memory of the region and underlined the need for a proactive approach to the disease. AEM wanted to tell the story with a

documentary to explain the past, present and future of a disease that continues to significantly affect families.

Who was involved

Several key voices were involved in the creation of the documentary, including health experts, affected people and their families.

Those affected gave moving

testimonies about the impact of meningitis on their daily lives, addressing the physical and emotional consequences. Their stories add a human dimension to the documentary, illustrating the resilience needed to adapt.

Authorities such as the President of the Xunta de Galicia, Alfonso Rueda, and the Mayor of Vigo, Abel Caballero, also featured in the film. Their participation was significant,

reflecting the institutional commitment to prevention. Both leaders stressed the importance of strengthening the vaccination schedule, a fundamental measure to reduce the risk of meningitis in the population.

What AEM hoped to achieve

Raising public awareness of the importance of vaccination against meningitis and of the consequences – that can affect people of all ages – was important to AEM. They wanted to remind the public that meningitis is still a threat, not just a disease of the past.

Galicia has implemented an updated vaccination schedule and is recognised for its best practices within Spain. AEM hopes this documentary and publicity will inspire other regions to improve their vaccine offerings and witness the positive impact of the €3 million MenB vaccine investment.

The full documentary was posted on social media in

commemoration of World Meningitis Day 2024. In total, the documentary has reached over 150,000 accounts, helping to boost awareness of World Meningitis Day in Spain.

The premiere




The premiere of the documentary in Vigo on 25th September 2024 proved very successful. Media coverage and attendance exceeded expectations, allowing the message to reach a wider audience for World Meningitis Day.

This experience strengthened AEM's commitment to meningitis awareness and confirmed that through collaborative work and support, great achievements can be made in promoting public health.

You can watch the documentary for free, with English subtitles, [on AEM's YouTube channel](#).



Further resources

-  [AEM website](#)
-  [AEM Instagram page](#)
-  [AEM Facebook page](#)

Contacts

Meningitis Research Foundation:

 meningitis.org

Confederation of Meningitis Organisations:

 como@meningitis.org

 comomeningitis.org

This documentary is the present, past and future of meningitis, a disease I experienced first-hand. A message of hope for us to continue working together to make meningitis a disease of the past.

Cristina Regojo Balboa, AEM President and meningitis survivor from Galicia

