



Four approaches to raising meningitis awareness in Turkey

To mark World Meningitis Day 2024, the **Meningitis Volunteers Association (MVA)**, Turkey, organised an awareness-raising poster campaign, a live online interview with a paediatrician and a symbolic lantern release event. They also obtained media coverage both online and in print.



Organisation

Menenjit Gönüllüleri Derneği



Background

Volunteer-run organisation dedicated to raising awareness of meningitis



Location

Turkey

“Wish lantern” release event

Turkey had the sixth highest number of meningitis cases in the World Health Organization EURO region in 2021. The Turkish community dream of a world free of meningitis.

MVA wanted to create a visual representation of this collective wish. Creatively interpreting CoMO’s global “Light the road ahead” World Meningitis Day campaign, they organised a lantern release event. This was attended by local community members, who received flyers with information about signs and symptoms.

Participants wrote their personal hopes for the future on the lanterns before releasing them together. This symbolic expression of optimism generated powerful images that were shared on social media, leading to increased engagement.

Note: MVA worked closely with local authorities and security officials to ensure that this lantern release event complied with local laws and safety concerns. Releasing lanterns is not permitted in all countries; please check with local authorities and environmental groups if considering a similar activity.

Poster campaign

MVA created a colourful, eye-catching poster promoting World Meningitis Day and communicating the importance of acting quickly if meningitis is suspected. The posters included social media links to learn more about signs and symptoms and about the organisation.

Volunteers then put up the posters in strategic locations around a university campus and the university hospital. These locations targeted young adults – an age group with increased risk of meningitis – and hospital visitors, whom MVA predicted would be more open to health messaging. The posters were also displayed on local bus stops and buses in print and digital formats.

Conclusion

MVA's multi-pronged approach spanned a range of formats and drew the attention of various audiences both locally and nationally. They sparked conversations about meningitis and noted significant increases in social media engagement.

Media coverage

MVA pitched stories to various local newspapers in the region around Istanbul and obtained three pieces of coverage.

The articles highlighted World Meningitis Day and stated that local awareness of meningitis is increasing. Each piece also featured the story of a person affected by meningitis with a connection to MVA, making the overall message more relatable. The organisation's mission – to inform and protect the public, support recovery and reduce health inequalities – came through clearly in the pieces.



Online interview

On World Meningitis Day itself, MVA broadcast an interview with paediatrician Ikbal Durak on Instagram Live.

They promoted the event in advance through social media channels, newsletters and community groups.

Dr. Durak gave an overview of what meningitis is, its symptoms, the importance of vaccination as a preventative measure, its impact on children and the importance of early detection. She also answered questions from the audience.

The video reached around 500 people during its first week on the platform.

Further resources

- [MVA website](#)
- [MVA Instagram page](#)

Contacts

Meningitis Research Foundation:

- [meningitis.org](https://www.meningitis.org)

Confederation of Meningitis Organisations:

- como@meningitis.org
- [comomeningitis.org](https://www.comomeningitis.org)

“World Meningitis Day is a vital opportunity to raise awareness about this preventable and treatable disease. Through our efforts, we hope to educate communities, encourage timely action, and ultimately save lives. The passion and dedication of our volunteers inspire me daily.”

Burak Talha Akin, volunteer, MVA