

# 7<sup>th</sup> International Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Conference

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## *Maritess Jewson*

*Pulmonary Hypertension Association UK, UK*

### **Living with pulmonary hypertension**

**Statement:** People around the world are waiting too long to be diagnosed with the rare, incurable heart and lung condition of pulmonary hypertension (PH) because its symptoms are often mistaken for other diseases. Its rarity and the 'invisible' nature of its symptoms also mean that the public do not understand how serious PH is, making life harder for those who live with it and so to help to understand PH, the author has started online awareness campaigns to help those with PH live an 'ordinary life.'

**Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** To help the public and medical professionals to understand what we have to deal with every day, the best way to reach these people is through social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

**Findings:** My awareness campaigns have caught the attention of many people around the world who either have PH, don't know what it is, or have not heard of it. People have been coming forward to speak out about having PH and it is helping them to understand their condition. Those who do not know about PH have contacted me to say they have learnt a lot from my awareness campaigns.

**Conclusion & Significance:** Sadly, PH will probably always exist as a condition but with the awareness that I, and others, are generating on social platforms, I believe that one day it will be understood and diagnosed sooner. I also hope that with people coming forward and taking part in medical research, thanks to the awareness campaigns, one day a cure will be found.

### **Biography**

Maritess Jewson is a certified Music Therapist in the UK and was diagnosed with Pulmonary Hypertension in 2008 by the specialists at the Royal Brompton Hospital in London. Since Maritess' diagnosis she is passionate about raising as much awareness as possible for this condition. Maritess leads awareness campaigns online to reach people in the social media network to help those with PH to understand their condition and to make people who have not heard of Pulmonary Hypertension aware of the seriousness of this condition and how it affects people's lives. Maritess' awareness campaigns reach thousands of people everyday and she works endlessly to make these campaigns heard across the world. Maritess is an Ambassador for the Pulmonary Hypertension Association UK (PHA UK) and works with them to help support people living with PH and raise awareness.

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