

ISMA^{UK} Annual Report 2023

As we approach the end of 2023, it's time to reflect on the year we've been through and give you feedback on how it went for ISMA^{UK}. We have focused on development and collaboration, both internally and externally, and look forward to building further links and extending relationships in 2024. This will be a special year, as ISMA^{UK} marks 50 years since the organisation was founded.

ISMA^{UK} Interactive Webinars

Our Online Interactive Webinars have seen another successful year, with seven webinars held on subjects ranging from mastering the art of difficult conversations to combatting ageism. We were fortunate to have some amazing speakers, including our Patron Professor Sir Cary Cooper, Celynn Morin, George Bell, Lucy Standing and others. Several of our own members also spoke or moderated, including Paul Dorrington, Jane Thomas, Nick Woodeson, Charlotte Turnbull – thank you to them all.

The first Interactive Webinar of 2024 on Thursday 25th January will feature Charlotte Kemp, The Futures Alchemist, on *Beyond Future Shock: How to Thrive in an Accelerating World*. Details will be on the [webinars](#) page soon.

International Stress Awareness Week

Held between 30th October – 3rd November, the highlight of [International Stress Awareness Week](#) was our one-day [Online Global Stress Summit](#) on Stress Awareness Day, Wednesday 1st November. We enjoyed the highest attendance we have had for an Online Summit, with 30 or more attending each of five panel sessions on highly relevant topics for our times –

- Why Do Men Find It Hard to Talk About Their Mental Health?
- Why Conversations About Money Are So Difficult
- Using the Power of Music to Reduce Stress and Improve Wellbeing
- A Father and Daughter Journey with Bipolar Disorder
- Navigating the Future of Work: Balancing Technology, AI and Employee Wellbeing

Our expert speakers included Russ Kane of the Men's Radio Station, Ruth Pott of BAM UK & IRL, Jim Pollard of the Men's Mental Health Forum, Charlie Goodman of the Institute for Financial Wellbeing, Ryan Briggs of FinWELL, Laura Westcott of Music for Mental Wealth, Nick McClelland of Champion Health and Tony Reeves of Deloitte UK. Once again, several of our own members took part by speaking or moderating, including Mike Segall, Simon Hawtrey-Woore and David Briscombe. Our thanks to them all for making our 2023 Summit such a success.

There is still time to watch the Summit sessions in the Hub, where they will be until 31st December. If you haven't registered, the replay can be accessed [here](#). If you have registered, just sign on in The Hub [here](#).

Sponsorship

We were delighted to have [MANUP?](#) as sponsor of International Stress Awareness Week and of the Summit in 2023, and they also contributed with speakers: their founder and CEO Dan Somers was a panellist on the Men's Mental Health panel, while Ian Dempsey, a MANUP? trustee and independent financial adviser, took part in the session on Conversations About Money. MANUP? is a charity that seeks to change people's thoughts, opinions and minds about men and mental health. Their focus is on raising awareness about men's mental health, chipping away at stigma. We are looking forward to building our relationship with them in 2024 and would like to thank them for their generous support this year.

ISMA^{UK} Products

Wellbeing & Resilience at Work Training Programme

This is our flagship product. The main objective of the programme is to help participants review basic areas of health to manage stress and ensure wellbeing is in balance. It can be used in small groups, online or in the workplace. ISMA^{UK}'s Patron, **Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE, commented:** *"It combines very accessible, useful information with interactive sessions. It is a supportive guide and toolkit for individuals, HR and occupational health professionals."*

It's a boon for anyone who is planning a course but has no time to prepare. ISMA^{UK} have done it for you! For more information and to purchase a copy go [here](#). ISMA^{UK} members get a discounted rate.

Stress Test Cards

These unique cards give an instant read-out of your stress levels. If you're running a training course they can be used as an ice breaker. You can purchase them singly or in packs of 50 or 100 [here](#).

Start Living Stop Stressing Training Programme

This [programme](#) can be used as an interactive workshop, as an interactive group session or in one-to-one sessions. The objective is to guide participants to recognise areas of their wellbeing that require attention and provide them with tools and techniques that, if implemented, could generate improvements in their wellbeing.

Stress Journals

You can now access *The International Journal of Stress Prevention and Wellbeing* from our website. It is a peer-reviewed journal, sponsored by ISMA^{UK}, which publishes articles on all aspects of the theory, research and practice of stress prevention and wellbeing. Free access to this journal is a membership benefit. You will also find details of two other journals on the [same page](#).

ISMA^{UK} Ultimate Stress Relief Playlist

This is a new 'product', originally compiled to accompany the Summit panel on Using the Power of Music to Reduce Stress and Improve Wellbeing. It includes over 20 specially chosen pieces of music which help reduce stress and improve wellbeing. It's on [YouTube](#) and it will be possible to access it from our [Free Downloadable Resources](#) page in January. Your suggestions for relaxing music that can be added are welcomed!

ISMA International

One of our Ambassadors is in Italy - Dr Pier Michele Mandrillo, a Lecturer at the Universities of Foggia, Chieti and Tor Vergata Rome. Dr Mandrillo coordinated the **7th Italian Stress Awareness Day** held in Milan on Friday 3rd – Saturday 4th November 2023 as part of the IAPEM and ASMOE International Congress. **It featured 16 conference sessions and was attended by over 1,000 doctors from all parts of Italy. You can read a report of the event [here](#).**

Spain is also very proactive and our members there are Carolina Caparrós and **Anna M Sells of Bienestar Hub, which** advises SMEs in Spain on health and wellbeing and the management and prevention of stress at work. During Stress Awareness Week 30th October – 3rd November 2023, they held a unique congress, entitled **From Stress in the Legal Profession to #jurisbalance: Redefining Health, Productivity and Success in the Legal World**, designed to raise awareness among legal professionals about the impact of stress on their health and performance.

You can find a full programme and session outlines [here](#). There is also a video on **Resilience Training for Lawyers**, which took the form of a discussion with ISMA^{UK} trustee and W Legal partner, Charlotte Turnbull, and Carole Spiers, moderated by Carolina Caparrós.

ISMA India organised the **10th International Congress of Stress, Performance and Wellness**, held in Hyderabad on 15th – 16th December, in association with Jawaharlal Nehru Technology University, Hyderabad. We hope for a report on how it went from Dr B Udaya Kumar Reddy, branch chair, before long, but the leaflet promoting it can be seen [here](#).

Australia branch has a new chair – Ian Shakespeare. Ian is an experienced mental health professional who has worked in the health industry across Australia and the Asia Pacific for nearly 30 years. He runs his own consulting business and has worked as a psychologist, educator, trainer, and facilitator and been CEO of a major international EAP company.

The branch, based in Western Australia, is ‘focused on supporting the membership in dealing with contemporary stress issues, managing them, and providing tools for identifying and coping with stress in the corporate setting’.

ISMA Pacific and Oceania is a new branch which has been set up by Veronica Connaughton. Veronica was previously chair of the Australia branch, but as Director, ISMA Pacific and Oceania; and Regional Chair, Australia-Japan-New Zealand, she is extending the reach of ISMA in the Southern Hemisphere. She is a nationally registered psychologist, experienced in individual stress management techniques and stress reduction in the workplace. She has over 35 years’ involvement with ISMA and has spent 40 years in medical health education.

Professor Stephen Palmer

We extend our thanks to Professor Stephen Palmer, who has served as President of ISMA International for several years now but decided to stand down to pursue other interests this year. We are proactively building our international links, building on the firm foundations he has helped to establish. Thank you, Stephen.

ISMA^{UK} on Social Media

We had a strong social media presence during International Stress Awareness Week and we are extending our social media profile on a more regular basis through the year too. This has been possible thanks to the efforts of our new social media specialist, Noam Dvir, who has worked tirelessly this year creating and uploading posts on LinkedIn, Facebook and X (Twitter).

Social media certainly raises our profile and attracts followers, so we have high hopes that there will be a steady increase in both awareness of ISMA^{UK} and what we do, and the number of followers we attract in our 50th year.

Our Valued Members

[Members](#) are our lifeblood, as without them there would be no ISMA^{UK}. We're always looking for opportunities to grow the membership, whether through events, referrals or promotion with the help of like-minded organisations.

The most popular membership classes are [Professionals](#) and [Associates](#). We would still like to develop more [Corporates](#) and hopefully more can be done to achieve this in 2024.

A Big Thank You ...

There are some wonderful people who give their time to ISMA^{UK} in various ways, and the year cannot pass without thanking them all for their help in 2023. I would like to mention:

The **Trustees** for their role in supporting ISMA^{UK} and its way forward.

Our **Ambassadors** who help to raise the profile of ISMA^{UK}

The **A-Team** [Action] - the people who offer creative thinking on a monthly basis and follow through with new ideas and directions we could take. There is always a place at the table for new A-Team members!

Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE, our esteemed patron, who has supported us throughout the year.

Stephen Fry, the well-known actor, writer and presenter who has been happy to support ISMA^{UK} and his testimonial appears prominently on our website.

Claire Parkinson, our administrator, and **Helen Johns**, our marketing consultant for their continued commitment and help in taking ISMA^{UK} forward.

Noam Dvir, who has been super-active in increasing our presence and activity on social media.

Maggie Stevens

Under Maggie's guidance, one of our [Ambassadors](#), ISMA^{UK} Scotland continued to grow in 2023, with new members joining all the time. You don't have to live in Scotland to be a member, so if you'd like to join, get in touch with Maggie at maggie.stevens20@gmail.com.

Alina Tudor of WebPro, who has made countless updates to our website during the year.

Louise McKenzie of LM Design who is responsible for the excellent logos and imagery that play a big part in the way that ISMA^{UK} comes across online.

Alastair Greener of Present Yourself who is the Stress Summit MC every year. He brings all the sessions together and provides excellent continuity. He is generous with his time, so a big thank you, Alastair, for your support.

Susan Kabani of Ugenie, our IT partners for both the Stress Summit and The Hub. Without Susan's support neither of these would be possible. This year, Susan went over and beyond as she continued to coordinate the tech, even on the verge of giving birth! Thank you, Susan, and a warm welcome to the new baby.

Our Partners

We have not gained any new partners this year, but we have increased the level of interaction that we have with existing partners, especially the HSE through their [Working Minds](#) campaign and also with [Make A Difference Events](#), who are happy to feature case study articles from ISMA^{UK} on their website (the first one, by Jessica Smyrl, is in preparation). I was pleased to be asked to speak at one of MAD's two major events in the year, The Watercooler, held in April at the Excel London. Details of partner events can be found [here](#).

ISMA^{UK} Website

This is updated frequently, with news of ISMA^{UK} events and changes. Amongst these, our International pages have been revamped and updated this year, including a separate international events page; our [Press & Media](#) page has been updated to include guest interviews as well as ISMA^{UK} media interviews and press releases through the year. We have re-designed all eleven leaflets that make up our Stress Management Resources, downloadable from our [Free Downloadable Resources](#) page. The 2023 Stress Summit pages will be archived under [Past Events](#). If you have any thoughts on ways in which the website can be improved, we would be pleased to hear them.

The Hub

The Hub is a community forum for ISMA^{UK} members, health professionals, and individuals with an interest in stress, mental health and wellbeing. It is designed to be a valuable library and information resource and offers an opportunity for supporters of ISMA^{UK} to share information on a wide range of relevant issues. If you have any suggestions for items that could be added, please let us know. And please use The Hub!

Our Theme for 2024

Our theme in ISMA^{UK}'s 50th year is: ***Campaigning to reduce stress and improve wellbeing.*** As has been noted in the media and in reports from [the HSE](#) and others, stress levels continue to rise and there is still much to be done to reduce the high incidence of stress and mental health-related issues in our society today. We will be playing our part, reaching out and collaborating with individuals and other organisations who are working to reduce stress and improve lives. We are also supporting our members and others who are working tirelessly to combat the incidence of stress and mental health issues and develop effective solutions across the workplace and in society.

Season's Greetings

And so 2024 beckons! At ISMA^{UK}, we are looking forward to going full steam ahead in the new year and to opening up many more doors of opportunity. May I wish you all a relaxing and restorative festive season.

It is a privilege to lead the Association into the next 50 years and I look forward to sharing with you all the activities we are busy planning for the 50th anniversary in 2024. Hopefully many of you can be involved in this special year in some way, however small.

Carole Spiers

Chair / ISMA^{UK}

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