

News Release

Your Contact

Alice.mcgrail@emdserono.com

Phone: +1 781 738-8791

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Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, and Twitch Join Forces on World Multiple Sclerosis Day to Connect People Living with MS

- **Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, and Twitch collaborate on World MS Day to increase understanding of the impact of multiple sclerosis (MS)**
- **Livestream event with Twitch influencers on May 30 will raise awareness and money for the MS International Federation and help connect people affected by the disease, in line with official World MS Day theme *MS Connections***

Darmstadt, Germany, May 28, 2020 – Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, today announced an innovative collaboration with Twitch, the world's leading service and community for multiplayer entertainment, focused on raising global awareness and understanding of the impact of multiple sclerosis (MS).

Recent research by MS Society UK suggests that 3 in 5 people with MS experience loneliness as a direct result of their condition¹. To challenge social barriers that can lead to loneliness and isolation, celebrate support networks and build community connection, the official theme for World MS Day 2020-2022 is *MS Connections*. World MS Day, launched by the Multiple Sclerosis International Federation (MSIF) and its members, is recognized on May 30 each year and spotlights the unseen impact of MS around the world.

Through an 8-hour [World MS Day](#) livestream event with Twitch influencers and special guests, including Luke Thomas, Director of Fundraising and Engagement at



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MSIF, Dr. Wallace Brownlee, MS Specialist Neurologist at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery in London, England, and three people living with MS, the two companies will virtually connect people affected by the disease and raise awareness of MS to help fight stigma associated with the disease. The livestream will also be used as a platform to raise funds for MSIF.

“As a company we are relentlessly focused on understanding MS from the inside out, and that curiosity drives everything we do,” said Andrew Paterson, Head of Neurology & Immunology at Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. “We know there is more to MS than the physical impact of the condition. Having a chronic disease like MS can lead to significant social barriers, which are likely being amplified since the emergence of COVID-19. At the same time, modern technology has made it easier than ever for people to connect. Online activities like gaming are increasingly used as ways to connect and socialize virtually, creating a sense of community. We are hopeful that this innovative collaboration with Twitch will connect people living with MS in a new way.”

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, has announced that they will donate €1 (up to €50,000) to MSIF for every re-share of posts published to their social channels, including the [@EMDSerono](#) Twitter handle, on World MS Day, using the hashtags #MSConnections and #MSInsideOut. The funds from both the social media retweets and the Twitch livestream will go towards MSIF’s Informed Decision Making program which helps create digital resources that connect communities around the world so that people with MS have access to the best possible information, for free, and can make informed choices about their health and lives.

Twitch, with 1.5 million tuning in at any given time and 15 million daily average users, continues its history of company-driven and community-driven charity initiatives. Since 2011, the Twitch community has raised over \$200 million in donations for various causes.

“More than ever before, people are turning to Twitch to seek not only entertainment, but also connection and community,” said Nathan Lindberg, Regional VP of Sponsorship Sales at Twitch. “We are proud to not only connect people with MS, but also raise awareness and understanding about the condition.”

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To watch the livestream, log on to Twitch from 12pm/noon EST on May 30:

- **Noon – 2pm EST:** [YogsCast](#) with Luke Thomas, Director of Fundraising and Engagement at MSIF, discussing World MS Day and MSIF`s Informed Decision Making program, and Eddie, living with MS
- **2 – 4pm EST:** [NickEh30](#) with Dr. Wallace Brownlee, MS Specialist Neurologist at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery in London, England, discussing the basics of MS
- **4 – 6pm EST:** [BrookeAB](#) with Trishna, living with MS, discussing the importance of staying physically active
- **6 – 8pm EST:** [Swiftor](#) with MS gamer Hamish, discussing how platforms like Twitch can help connect people

Highlights will also be shown on www.twitch.tv during the day.

About Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, inflammatory condition of the central nervous system and is the most common, non-traumatic, disabling neurological disease in young adults. It is estimated that approximately 2.3 million people have MS worldwide. While symptoms can vary, the most common symptoms of MS include blurred vision, numbness or tingling in the limbs and problems with strength and coordination. The relapsing forms of MS are the most common.

About World MS Day

World MS Day is officially marked on May 30 each year. Events and campaigns take place throughout the month of May, and it brings the global MS community together to share stories, raise awareness and campaign with and for everyone affected by multiple sclerosis. To challenge social barriers, celebrate support networks and build community connection, the theme for World MS Day 2020-2022 is *MS Connections*. The campaign is developed by Multiple Sclerosis International Federation (MSIF) in collaboration with members of the global MSIF movement.

About Twitch

Launched in 2011, Twitch is a global community that comes together each day to create multiplayer entertainment: unique, live, unpredictable experiences created by the interactions of millions. It brings the joy of co-op to everything, from casual gaming and world-class esports to anime marathons, music, and art streams. Twitch also hosts [TwitchCon](#), the biggest community event of the year, where tens of thousands of people come together to celebrate and connect with others who share their interests and passions. [Twitch](#) is always live. Stay up to date on all things Twitch on [Twitter](#) and on their [Blog](#).

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About Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, operates across healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 57,000 employees work to make a positive difference to millions of people's lives every day by creating more joyful and sustainable ways to live. From advancing gene editing technologies and discovering unique ways to treat the most challenging diseases to enabling the intelligence of devices – the company is everywhere. In 2019, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, generated sales of € 16.2 billion in 66 countries.

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Scientific exploration and responsible entrepreneurship have been key to the company`s technological and scientific advances. This is how Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, has thrived since its founding in 1668. The founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed company. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, holds the global rights to the Merck name and brand. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the business sectors of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, operate as EMD Serono in healthcare, MilliporeSigma in life science, and EMD Performance Materials.

ⁱ <https://www.mssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/news/loneliness-report>