



'B Me' Backgrounder

What is 'B Me'?

'B Me' is an international awareness initiative that uses design concepts to challenge the way people think about living with rheumatoid arthritis. The initiative was developed with input and collaboration from people with rheumatoid arthritis, advocacy group representatives, physicians and design institutions.

The 'B Me' initiative has facilitated the creation of socially inclusive and human-centered lifestyle concepts that address the everyday challenges associated with rheumatoid arthritis. These concepts were developed to support independent living for people with rheumatoid arthritis while remaining appealing to society at large.

By using the concept of "inclusive" design, the 'B Me' initiative brings to life the significant impact of rheumatoid arthritis on a person's ability to function normally. "Inclusive" design identifies a specific need and looks to find a solution that is aesthetically pleasing as well as functional. These designs appeal to a broader population, not just those affected by a given illness.

The design process

'B Me' was launched in 2007 during World Arthritis Day (October 12). Through brochures and a website (www.bmeinitiative.com), individuals were invited to submit ideas and opinions about the impact of rheumatoid arthritis on their ability to carry out everyday activities and to share strategies that they have developed to best manage the challenges of living with this condition. More than 500 people worldwide submitted thoughts outlining issues and needs they have in leading a normal life.

The submissions formed the basis of a 'B Me' design workshop, addressing the theme of independent living as it relates to rheumatoid arthritis. Teams of designers from throughout Europe harnessed the ideas to develop concepts relating to working life, travel, clothing and leisure.

The resulting design concepts are on display at the European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR) annual congress and online at www.bmeinitiative.com. A CD ROM including the design concepts is also available upon request.

What's next

Following EULAR, the design concepts will be made available to the Roche offices worldwide to exhibit at local medical or patient meetings throughout the remainder of 2008. The most



innovative submissions received outlining the challenges of living with rheumatoid arthritis will also be shared in a short booklet which will be distributed at the time of World Arthritis Day in October 2008.

Supported by Roche

'B Me' is funded by Roche, as part of its long-term commitment to raise awareness of rheumatoid arthritis and help people with the condition to live as independently as possible.

Further information

For further information, please visit www.bmeinitiative.com, send an email to B-Me@cohnwolfe.com, or contact a 'B Me' representative at +44 20 7331 5318.