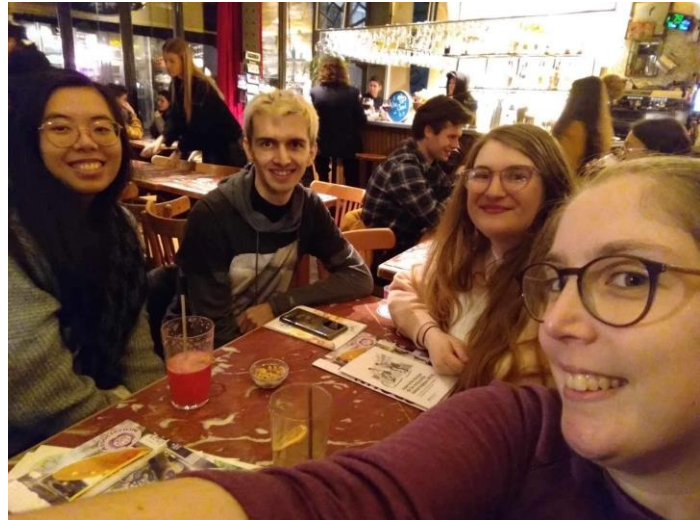


The impact of IBD on young professionals and the idea of the escape game

Let's meet in Brussels!

On Thursday, 30 November 2023, ASBL Crohn RCUH organized an informal meeting for the Belgian youth group. We met and discussed how having a disease had influenced our professional career as one of us was studying nutrition, another one was working in the health system, one was working in the patients' association and another one in the pharmaceutical industry. Our professional choices resonated with each other. As an example, I was always interested in working in a health-related field. I was studying for a bachelor's in biology when I was diagnosed with UC. As a result, I grew an interest in the pharmaceutical industry and anything related to microbiology. I ended up graduating as a biotech engineer, specializing in the pharmaceutical industry. As a patient working in the pharmaceutical industry, I tend to be more quality and patient oriented and I also have a bigger picture of the health industry.



The Belgian IBD youth group

During my professional career, I had to choose different missions according to my health. I worked a lot in production aseptic areas which require you to wear appropriate suits. Since it could take minutes to dress and undress, it was not compatible with my needs to use the bathroom pretty often. I sometimes had to turn to more 'office' jobs to better accommodate myself. Overall, I met lots of understanding management and coworkers.

We also discussed our treatment and therapeutic de-escalation as well as our relationship with our bodies. Being treated in France, the therapeutic strategy can be quite different from Belgium's regarding the combination of medicine, for instance. We discussed the difficulty of stopping or reducing a treatment when in remission, to prevent side effects and higher risks of cancers linked to our medication. We admitted that we knew very little about the topic.

We discussed what activities we were interested in for the Belgian youth group. It was suggested to even create an escape game based on the difficulties faced by IBD patients. These projects could allow patients to share their experience with IBD and relate to similar experiences. It could also allow others to understand the difficulties that are met when living with IBD, in a fun way. For instance, the mission would be to go to the bathroom but in order to do that you would have to present your toilet pass and explain it to the staff. Since similar experiences are encountered by all patients, not only in Belgium, this project could be extended to the EFCCA Youth Group.