

## **Achim Kautz**

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Achim Kautz is CEO of Kautz5 gUG – a non-profit project and consulting company for patient-centred care research and health concepts. He is actively advocating for liver patients since more than 20 years. Over these years he was CEO of the German patient organization “Deutsche Leberhilfe e.V.” and co-initiator of the European Liver Patients’ Association (ELPA) and the World Hepatitis Alliance (WHA). He has been part of a number of EU declarations and WHO resolutions mainly in the liver field and serves as a member of the consultancy group in the Ministry of Health in Germany looking after the national elimination strategy for HIV, viral hepatitis and STDs. He is the initiator of many metabolic disease related health projects and active in NASH population research on national and international level. He is also co-initiator of the International Liver Cancer Movement (ILCM) with over 60 PAGs and scientific organizations globally. He is also a consultant for scientific associations and senior special advisor for Burson Cohn & Wolfe (BCW).

### **What is the role of patient advocacy groups in improving NAFLD awareness and how can the patient guideline help?**

Looking to the patient advocacy landscape in NAFLD we must note there are no specific advocacy groups existent, thus far. Therefore, patient groups from the fields of liver, diabetes and obesity need to take on NAFLD advocacy. Parallely there is a high need to build up national and pan-European NAFLD communities.

One important tool to start the process is a co-created aligned easy to understand guideline for patients living with NAFLD or NASH. This was the effort of a wide group of supporters and contributors coming from hepatology, gastroenterology, family medicine, nutrition, public health and patient groups and has been published in J Hep Reports in September 2021. Based on this, a working group under the leadership of Sven Francque (Antwerp University Hospital), Diane Langenbacher and Achim Kautz (both Kautz5 gUG) developed together a lay summary “*Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD): How you can reduce the risk for your liver and for other health issues?*” including 14 key steps for patients to take responsibility for their liver and to start the NAFLD/NASH management, pro-actively.

For the first-time patients with NAFLD/NASH have an empowering tool comparing high level evidence recommended with what is provided currently in their country care setting, building the foundation of further advocacy and awareness.

More awareness is needed especially in those with advanced fibrosis (stage F3 +) and those who are at high risk of NAFLD/NASH. Due to high rates of co-morbidities patient groups from the field of diabetes and obesity play a vital role increasing such awareness. In this context, GPs are also highly important as they address the risk to their obvious at-risk patients and need to start screening in a simple way by ultrasound and use of FIB-4. The lay version represents a valuable resource to distribute proper information.