Regina Dalmau

President of the CNPT (Comité Nacional para la Prevención del Tabaquismo)

I’m passionate about the fight against tobacco, and through my organisation I work to try to improve the regulations in this industry. I’m an active participant in the debate on social media, which sometimes even means suffering online attacks due to my strong position. For me, it’s all about getting the message out as far and wide as possible – some of my letters have been published on one of Spain’s most-read newspapers.

As a cardiologist, I became interested in the association with tobacco and cardiovascular disease prevention. Interestingly – and unfortunately – there is very little interest in tobacco consultation among doctors in Spain, it is not a subject that’s particularly attractive to cardiologists.

To me, it was striking that a risk factor which has so much supporting evidence was given so little attention. I was interested in breaking through this inertia and filling this gap, bringing attention and dedication in place of apathy.

The subject is now at last beginning to arouse the interest of cardiologists. I have persevered, systematically bringing the risk factor of tobacco into all my talks. I believe this should be a multidisciplinary collaboration, a synergy of all professions – by dedicating time and effort we can work together to really make a difference.

New tobacco laws have begun to make an impact, but there is still a long way to go – there have been fewer recent regulatory efforts and this impact is starting to stagnate. We need to keep making the effort – for the most part, people are quite well informed and law abiding, but tobacco is still very accessible because of its price.

Bringing the subject of tobacco and its part in cardiovascular disease to the forefront of conversations is something I’m a dedicated advocate of, and I will continue to be. Seeing my fellow professionals turning around to the idea that there is a link between the two is reassuring, but we need to continue our campaigns to see real results.