



Sixteen-year-old Isabella was diagnosed with epilepsy in 2019 but hasn't let this hold her back from becoming a national taekwondo champion in her home country of Chile.

Isabella Escoda

Chile



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When I tell people that I have epilepsy and myasthenia gravis, they question my accomplishments and treat me as weak or incapable.

I see my life as normal.

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International
Epilepsy Day

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I was diagnosed with epilepsy in 2019 and although it was unexpected and I had bad moments, it did not prevent me from continuing to practice taekwondo, a sport I am passionate about and in which I am a national champion. Nor has it prevented me from excelling academically, being among the best at my level.

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My family, Dr. Keryma Acevedo, and the Chilean League Against Epilepsy have been great support networks. They have helped me when I need it, they encouraged me not to limit myself and to always be my best version. They even convinced me to participate in a programming course called Technovation.

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I experienced stigma in my social circle in taekwondo. People started treating me as if I were weak or fragile. I mean, I've been practicing taekwondo for 6 years now and now they treat me differently, when they shouldn't, I'm still the same as always.

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**How can we
reduce stigma?**

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I believe that teaching people what epilepsy is and disproving the myths that exist about it is key.

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Epilepsy does not mean weakness, it means how strong and great someone can be in spite of the stereotypes that society presents.

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