

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

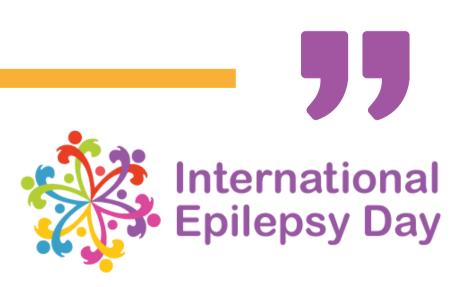
Chile





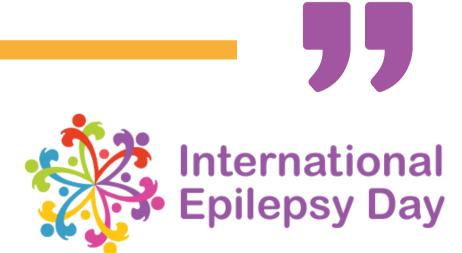
When I tell people that I have epilepsy and myasthenia gravis, they question my accomplishments and treat me as weak or incapable.

I see my life as normal.



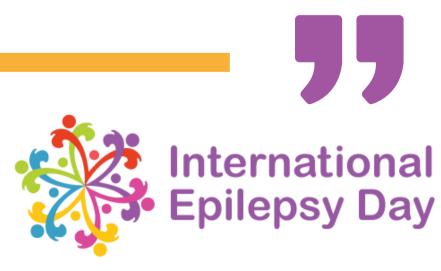


I was diagnosed with epilepsy in 2019 and although it was unexpected and I had bad moments, it did not prevent me from continuing to practice taekwondo, a sport I am passionate about and in which I am a national champion. Nor has it prevented me from excelling academically, being among the best at my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



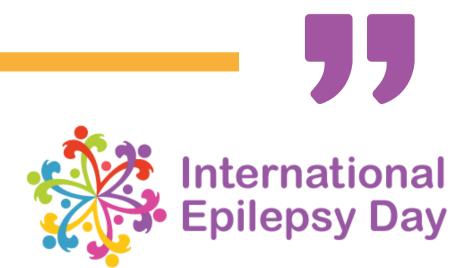


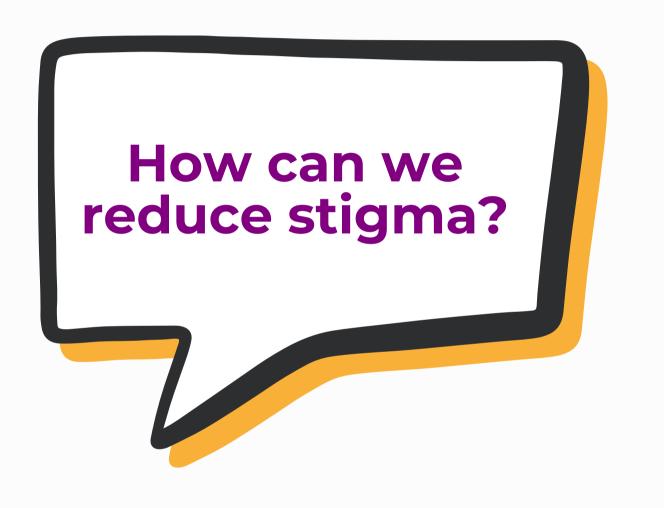
My family, Dr. Keryma Acevedo, and the Chilean League Against Epilepsy have been great support networks. They have helped me when I need it, they encouraged me not to limit myself and to always be my best version. They even convinced me to participate in a programming course called Technovation.





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.







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









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

