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New research indicates 95% of patients are in moderate to severe chronic pain despite one year of treatment

Year-long tracking survey demonstrates that 19% feel that their pain has become worse

Data support recent Chief Medical Officer Report highlighting the burden of chronic pain

European Federation of Chapters of the International Association for the Study of Pain (EFIC) Congress, Lisbon (10 September 2009): 95% of patients are suffering from moderate to severe chronic pain after one year of treatment¹ and only 12% are being prescribed strong opioids,

according to a year-long survey presented today at the EFIC Congress. The research reveals that more than half (56%) of patients' pain levels fail to improve over the course of a year's treatment and for 19%, their pain has become worse. Despite the high proportion of patients continuing to suffer pain, 64% believe they are taking the most appropriate level of medication and 58% believe that everything is being done to help them.

The new survey, entitled PainSTORY (**Pain Study Tracking Ongoing Responses for a Year**), is the first of its kind to track the impact of chronic pain on patients' lives over the course of a year, and involved 294 patients in 13 European countries, including 25 patients from the UK.

This survey was prepared by Ipsos MORI in association with, and sponsored by a restricted educational grant from, Mundipharma International Limited.

Regarding pain management, the survey demonstrates that out of all the patients who took part in the survey, 83% are prescribed medication for their pain, but 30% also resort to over the counter (OTC) medication to try to manage their pain either alone or in combination with other therapies. Despite the fact that 95% of patients receiving treatment are suffering from moderate-to-severe pain, only 12% of the total are being prescribed a strong opioid treatment, 25% a weak opioid and 43% are prescribed a non-opioid treatment. The research also reveals that only 23% of the total had their prescription changed to a stronger type of pain medication over the course of the year.

These results provide evidence to support the recent report by the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, which highlighted that of the 5 million people in the UK who develop chronic pain every

¹ Treatment includes prescription medication, over the counter medication and alternative medication

year only two thirds recover, and called for “a major initiative to widen access to high-quality pain services”ⁱ. Currently more than 7.8 million people in the UK live with chronic pain, with back pain alone estimated to cost the UK economy £12.3 billion per year,ⁱⁱ and the cost from all other sources is much higher. The report called for a range of actions including improved training for healthcare professionals, inclusion of pain assessment in the QOF, a network of rapid access pain clinics and a move towards a multidisciplinary approach with groups forming local pain networks to improve the quality of local services.

The survey also illustrates that almost half of all patients (47%) report side effects as a result of their medication, the most common of which is constipation,² experienced by almost half (45%) of patients, 49% of whom are receiving treatment with opioids. Although highly effective in controlling pain, opioids are associated with opioid-induced constipation (OIC). The research indicates that 26% of patients taking opioid medication turn to laxatives to help relieve their constipation, which may alleviate symptoms but will not address the cause of the problem.

Commenting on the findings, Dr Tony O’Brien, Consultant Physician in Palliative Medicine at Cork University, said: “This research reveals an alarmingly high prevalence of uncontrolled chronic pain in our communities. This serious public health problem must be addressed as a matter of urgency. Patients suffering pain require comprehensive evaluation and assessment by skilled health care professionals. Selected patients will benefit from a supervised trial of opioid medication in order to achieve an optimal level of analgesia, whilst preventing unwanted opioid adverse effects, including opioid induced constipation. The objective is to ensure that patients can experience the best possible quality of life.”

The research provides some valuable insights into patients’ experience of healthcare professionals. Despite the high proportion of patients continuing to suffer pain, the number of patients visiting a doctor declined over the course of the year from 83% at the beginning of the survey to 70% at the end. By the end of the survey, 58% had been given a physical examination, 22% were rated on a pain scale, 19% were sent for further tests and only 2% had seen a pain specialist consistently throughout the year.

Across the year, 44% of patients report feeling alone in tackling their pain and two thirds (65%) of patients feel anxious or depressed as a result of their pain. For 28% of patients, their pain is so bad they report they sometimes want to die. Patients report feeling trapped by a pain which may vary in intensity, but continuously affects every aspect of their life.

² The term ‘constipation’ incorporated bloating, stomach ache and stomach cramps

Commenting on the findings of the survey, Ian Semmons, Chairman of Action on Pain, said: "This research presents a unique insight into patients' year-long journey through pain. We have been aware for some time that treatment of chronic pain was under resourced, but this research reveals the full shocking extent of the problem, that after 12 months patients are still trapped in an ongoing cycle of pain and a large proportion seem to be losing hope and simply accepting the severe impact their pain has on their lives

This latest data provide further support to the European Pain in Cancer (EPIC) survey findings published in the *Annals of Oncology*, in August. This survey revealed that cancer pain and the side effects associated with its treatment have a significant impact on the quality of life of many cancer patients across Europe and Israel.ⁱⁱⁱ The results show the emotional and physical impact of cancer pain, with over a third of patients (36%) describing their pain as 'intolerable' and over two thirds (69%, n=573) experiencing difficulties in performing normal activities in daily life as a result of their pain.

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Note to editors

About the survey

PainSTORY (Pain Study Tracking Ongoing Responses for a Year) is the first study of its kind to track patients with chronic pain over one year, providing in depth insight into how pain impacts the daily lives of patients and the management of pain in 13 European countries.

The PainSTORY survey was conducted by an independent research company, Ipsos MORI, in collaboration with the following independent third parties:

- European Federation of IASP Chapters
- World Institute of Pain
- OPEN Minds

The survey was sponsored by a restricted educational grant from, and prepared in association with, Mundipharma International Limited.

Methodology

294 patients suffering from non-malignant (osteoarthritis, back pain / lower back pain, osteoporosis, neuropathic pain, mixed pain, other long term pain), chronic pain (i.e. lasting for more than three months) rating ≥ 5 -10 on a pain scale at screening stage (where 0 = no pain and 10 = the worst pain imaginable) completed the survey. At the evaluation stage of the survey, patients' pain levels were ranked as mild (1-3), moderate (4-7) or severe (8-10). Respondents were studied for 12 months and research was carried out in 13 countries across Europe: United Kingdom, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands and Norway by an independent research company, Ipsos MORI. From the UK, 25 patients participated.

The study consisted of four waves of qualitative interviews between April 2008 and May 2009. Interim engagement activities such as diaries and 'life books' were sent to patients between the four waves to provide additional insight. Comparisons between baseline data and subsequent wave results showed how the impact of pain and pain management changes over the course of a year.

About Mundipharma / Napp

The Napp/Mundipharma/Norpharma independent associated companies, including Napp Pharmaceutical Holdings Limited, Purdue Pharma LP and Mundipharma International Limited, are privately owned companies and joint ventures covering the world's pharmaceutical markets. The companies worldwide are

dedicated to bringing to patients with severe and debilitating diseases the benefits of novel treatment options in fields such as severe pain, haemato-oncology, Rheumatoid Arthritis and respiratory disease.

Please visit www.painstory.org for further information, or contact:

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ⁱ 150 years of the Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer: On the state of public health 2008. Department of Health Published 16 March 2009.

ⁱⁱ Brevick H, Collett B, Ventafridda V et al. Survey of Chronic Pain in Europe: prevalence, impact on daily life, and treatment. *European Journal of Pain* 2006; 10(4): 287-333

ⁱⁱⁱ Breivik H, Cherny N, Collett B et al. Cancer-related pain: a pan-European survey of prevalence, treatment and patient attitudes. *Ann Oncol* 2009; 20(8): 1420-33.