

**Despite three months of pain treatment, one in three patients still suffer from severe chronic pain**

*Three in five patients feel depressed or anxious as a result of their pain*

**European Week Against Pain (20–25 October 2008), Cambridge:** Despite treatment efforts, chronic pain management is failing one in three (n = 377) patients suffering from severe chronic pain, and three in five (n = 336) patients feel moderately or extremely anxious or depressed as a result of their pain. Whilst eight in ten (n = 377) chronic pain patients are taking prescription medication, one in two (n = 307) of these patients are suffering the additional burden of side effects. These are the findings released today from the interim data from PainSTORY (**Pain Study Tracking Ongoing Responses for Year**), the first survey of its kind to provide in-depth insight into how chronic pain impacts the lives of patients over one year in 13 European countries.

Today's data provide a picture of patients' lives over the three months since the survey was initiated and shows that despite consultation with a healthcare professional and treatment patients are still struggling with their pain, impacting patients' quality of life.

"Interim results from PainSTORY are important and highlight that patients continue to suffer from chronic pain despite seeking medical attention," said Dr Varrassi, President of the European Federation of IASP Chapters, a leading pain society. "The medical community need to provide adequate treatment for patients in moderate-severe pain, but there seems to still be barriers that need to be overcome".

Since their initial interview three months ago, for 77 percent (n = 377) of patients the level of pain they experience has either stayed the same or even deteriorated further. 33% (n=377) of patients continue to suffer from severe chronic pain, 15% (n = 377) had progressed from moderate to severe pain, and 1% (n = 377) from mild to severe pain.

PainSTORY shows that both the physical and psychological aspects of patients' lives are affected by their pain. Six out of ten (n = 336) patients are experiencing problems walking about and over half (n=336) experience problems sleeping. The influence of pain also extends into patients' working lives, and almost half (n = 195) have changed the way they work. "I couldn't interact. The pain trapped me and I couldn't socialise. I felt like a prisoner of the pain and really conditioned by it," said patient 14 from the United Kingdom.

Today's data show patients are being prescribed suboptimal treatment for their pain. Of the 81 percent (n = 377) of patients in moderate-severe pain on prescription medication, only 13

percent were prescribed strong opioids. Over half of patients were suffering at least one side effect as a result of their prescribed medication (n = 162), including constipation, dizziness and drowsiness, which are common symptoms for both weak and strong opioids.

“Side effects are affecting these patients. Patients are finding themselves in situations where they need to choose between using pain relief medications, or compromising their pain management by not taking medications to avoid the burden of side effects,” stated Professor Erdine from the World Institute of Pain. “We are interested to see the next wave of results for PainSTORY. There has already been some interesting issues that have been brought to light. This survey demonstrates the pressing need for improved management of pain across Europe.”

[www.painstory.org](http://www.painstory.org)

**-Ends-**

#### **Notes to editors About the survey**

PainSTORY (**P**ain **S**tudy **T**racking **O**ngoing **R**esponses for a **Y**ear) is the first study of its kind to track patients with chronic pain for a year, providing a picture of the lives of people living in pain, and the management of pain in 13 European countries.

Baseline results from the study show that chronic pain has a significant impact on the daily lives of patients. The survey aims to better understand the management of chronic pain across Europe.

The PainSTORY survey is being conducted by an independent research company, IPSOS, in collaboration with the following independent third parties:

- European Federation of IASP Chapters
- World Institute of Pain
- Arthritis and Rheumatism International
- OPEN Minds

The survey is sponsored by a restricted educational grant from Mundipharma International Limited.

#### **Methodology**

PainSTORY recruited patients suffering from non-malignant (osteoarthritis, back pain / lower back pain, osteoporosis, neuropathic pain, mixed pain, other long term pain), moderate to severe (rate 5–10 on a pain scale) chronic pain (i.e. lasting for more than three months). Respondents are studied for 12 months. The research is being carried out in 13 countries across Europe: United Kingdom, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway by an independent research company, IPSOS.

The study consists of four waves of qualitative interviews between April 2008 and March 2009. Interim engagement activities between the four waves are sent to patients to provide additional insight, such as diaries and lifebooks. Comparisons between baseline data and subsequent wave results will show how the impact of pain and pain management changes over the course of a year.

## **About the European Week Against Pain**

The European Week Against Pain (EWAP) which takes place annually, was started as part of the European Federation of IASP Chapters' (EFIC's), Europe Against Pain Initiative, in October 2001. EWAP aims to create more awareness of pain as a major healthcare problem amongst the general public, healthcare workers and healthcare policy makers.

The theme of this year's EWAP is fibromyalgia, a widespread musculoskeletal pain and fatigue disorder that occurs predominately in women. Unexplained widespread pain occurs in about 10% of the general adult population in Western countries, with approximately half of those affected meeting American College of Rheumatology (ACR) classification criteria for fibromyalgia.

### **For further information please contact:**

Emily Bunting, Cohn & Wolfe

Email: [Emily.Bunting@cohnwolfe.com](mailto:Emily.Bunting@cohnwolfe.com)

Tel: +44 207 331 5310

Claire Greeff, Cohn & Wolfe

Email: [Claire.Greeff@cohnwolfe.com](mailto:Claire.Greeff@cohnwolfe.com)

Tel: +44 207 331 5382

*The PainSTORY survey was sponsored by a restricted educational grant from Mundipharma International Ltd, Cambridge, England*

[www.painstory.org](http://www.painstory.org)