

New survey shows patients resigning themselves to a life of pain

A new survey, sponsored by Mundipharma International Limited, entitled PainSTORY (Pain Study Tracking Ongoing Responses for a Year) has revealed that although 95% of chronic pain patients are suffering pain after a year of treatment, 64% believe they are taking the most appropriate medication and over half believe that everything possible is being done to help them. These results demonstrate that a high proportion of patients are accepting chronic pain as a permanent part of their lives that cannot be challenged, despite the suffering it causes.

PainSTORY is the first study of its kind to track the impact of ongoing chronic pain on patients' lives over the course of a year, and involved 294 patients from 13 European countries, including 25 patients from the UK who completed the 1 year follow-up.

Of the patients surveyed, the research reveals that one year on, chronic pain still controls the life of six in ten of them, with more than half of the patients' pain levels failing to improve. For 17% of the patients surveyed, their pain got worse over the year. Patients' everyday life is affected most, with eight in ten respondents reporting that their pain has an impact on their quality of life. Patients highlight ongoing challenges associated with childcare, with 53% reporting difficulties in looking after their children at the end of the research compared to 47% at the beginning. The research also reveals that pain has a significant impact on patients' ability to work: 65% worry that their pain will mean they will have to stop work completely.

As many people with pain know, the emotional impact of pain is just as detrimental as its physical impact. Across the year, 44% of the patients surveyed report feeling alone in tackling their pain and two-thirds of patients feel anxious or depressed as a result of their pain. For 28% of patients, their pain is so bad that 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.

PainSTORY survey results provide compelling evidence to support the earlier report by Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, which highlighted that of the 5 million people in the UK who develop chronic pain every year, only two-thirds recover, and called for "a major initiative to widen access to high-quality pain services". 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.

The survey findings point to a number of reasons for patients' ongoing suffering. Many patients may not be receiving the appropriate medication to control their pain - despite 95% of patients suffering from moderate to severe chronic pain receiving treatment, only 14% had been prescribed strong opioid medication at the end of the year-long research, with 30% resorting to over the counter (OTC) medication to try to manage their pain either alone or in combination with other therapies.

Patients' contact with physicians may also be less frequent than is needed. 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 year to 70% at the end. Of the 68% of patients who consistently consulted a healthcare professional across the year, only 2% had consulted a pain specialist consistently throughout the year.

#### About the survey

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

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