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Embargo: 00:01 CET, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009

### ***New survey shows patients resigning themselves to a life of pain***

**Despite a year of treatment, 95% of patients are suffering chronic pain, yet 64% believe they are on the most appropriate treatment**

***New survey shows patients resigning themselves to a life of pain***

**European Federation of Chapters of the International Association for the Study of Pain (EFIC) Congress, Lisbon (10 September 2009):** Although 95% of chronic pain patients are suffering pain after a year of treatment<sup>1</sup>, 64% believe they are taking the most appropriate medication and over half (58%) still believe that everything possible is being done to help them, according to the results of a one-year survey of patients with chronic pain, presented today at the EFIC Congress. These results demonstrate that a high proportion of patients accept chronic pain as a permanent part of their lives that cannot be challenged, despite the suffering it causes 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 ongoing 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.

The research reveals that, one year on, chronic pain still controls the life of six in ten (62%) patients, with more than half (56%) of patients' pain levels failing to improve. For 19% of patients, their pain has become even worse. Patients' everyday life is affected most, with eight in ten (82%) 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Treatment includes prescription medication, over the counter medication and alternative medication

Recounting her personal experiences, chronic pain patient, Sheila Richards, from Swansea commented, 'I used to be a busy active person but with the onset of chronic pain my life changed drastically. I was kept in hospital for four weeks while they struggled to develop the most appropriate pain management regimen; it was the toughest time of my life. Even now, my life is very different and there are many things I cannot do, such as driving the 200-mile trip to see my daughter and new granddaughter in Rugby. No matter how much I want to go, with this pain I simply get too tired.'

These results provide compelling 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 year, only two-thirds recover, and called for "a major initiative to widen access to high-quality pain services".<sup>i</sup> 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.<sup>ii</sup>

The emotional impact of pain is just as detrimental as its physical impact. 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 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.

Commenting on the findings of the survey, Ian Semmons, Chairman of Action on Pain, said: "This research presents an interesting insight into patients' year-long journey through pain. We have been aware for some time that treatment of chronic pain was underresourced, 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".

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 12% 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.

Experience of treatment side effects can have a major influence on patients' attitude to pain management. Almost half (47%) of all patients taking prescription medication report side effects, the most common of which is constipation<sup>2</sup>, experienced by 45% of patients, 49% of whom are receiving treatment with opioids. Although highly effective in controlling pain, opioids can be 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 of OIC but will not address the cause of the problem.

Commenting on the survey findings, Dr Tony O'Brien, Consultant Physician in Palliative Medicine at Cork University Hospital, said: "It is very distressing to note that such a large proportion of patients continue to experience uncontrolled pain. Sadly, many may suffer in silence. The human cost is immeasurable. These patients must have ready access to skilled healthcare professionals and be fully evaluated and assessed. Effective treatments are available and patients are encouraged to seek medical opinion at the earliest opportunity."

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.<sup>iii</sup> 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 (**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 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.

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'constipation' incorporated bloating, stomach ache and stomach cramps

### 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  $\geq 5$ -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 with the research being 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](http://www.painstory.org) for further information, or contact:**

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<sup>i</sup> 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.

<sup>ii</sup> Breivick 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

<sup>iii</sup> Breivick H, Cherry 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.