

Twenty-one per cent of those living with chronic pain wait two years or more for diagnosis finds *Report on Pain*

Active role in treatment plan and education keys to success

January 10, 2011 (Toronto) — *The Report on Pain* released today, has revealed that for those Canadians living with chronic pain, the long wait to obtain a diagnosis does not necessarily mean that a treatment plan is close at hand.

Twenty-one per cent of Canadians who experience chronic pain stated they had to wait more than two years for a diagnosis for their condition, while only 54 per cent of those who have a diagnosis have a treatment plan. Not surprisingly therefore almost half (45 per cent) believe there are no treatment options that can help them with their condition.

The Report on Pain was commissioned by the Canadian Pain Coalition, with support from Pfizer Canada Inc., to explore the patient journey of Canadians living with chronic pain. The Report also revealed that 91 per cent of those with treatment plans play an active role in their pain treatment plan.

“There is an urgent need for Canadians living with chronic pain to educate themselves about their condition, treatment options and what is needed to have a meaningful conversation with their healthcare professional,” said Dr. John Clark, medical advisor to the Canadian Pain Coalition and Medical Director of Pain Services, Capital Health, in Halifax.

“Treatment and management options are available. When you have chronic pain, the key to living well and feeling productive is to arm yourself with information about your condition, find support and work with your doctor and other health care professionals to develop a treatment plan that works for you,” added Clark.

Chronic pain can result from injury or illness as well as be a symptom of many conditions. These conditions include fibromyalgia which affects 1.2 million Canadians, arthritis which affects 4.5 million Canadians and neuropathic pain which affects one million Canadians. Over half (56 per cent) of people living with chronic pain symptoms said they were frustrated that they have

yet to find a solution that works for them and 53 per cent felt that they receive conflicting information from healthcare professionals.

But when asked, 67 per cent of respondents were unsure what kind of support or resources they would like to see available to them. Of the 26 per cent who did have a suggestion, they indicated that they wanted, among other things, faster access to treatment, access to pain management clinics and better access to specialists, general practitioners or other physicians as well as better medical coverage for alternative practitioners.

Lynn Cooper, president of the Canadian Pain Coalition, which works to improve the understanding and management of chronic pain, sees important messages for Canadians about pain treatment from ***The Report on Pain***.

“All Canadians need access to health care resources that will prioritize how pain is diagnosed, treated and managed,” said Cooper. “In the meantime, more Canadians living with pain need to access the wealth of safe and medically approved information and support available to them. I know from experience that there are ways to reduce the pain and its impact on your life, but you need to be your own best advocate,” she added.

For example, ***The Report on Pain*** found that over the last year, only 48 per cent of those living with chronic pain used online health or condition-specific sites, such as canadianpaincoalition.ca, to learn more about their pain condition and helpful strategies for managing their pain. A mere 15 per cent turned to online patient communities. This is despite available support and knowledge in these communities, including how to talk to a doctor about symptoms of pain. While there is research in the medical community that complementary therapies, such as acupuncture or massage can help to relieve or lessen pain, only 30 per cent of respondents said they use the services of a complementary practitioner for their condition.

Other highlights from ***The Report on Pain***:

- When asked about how chronic pain affected their quality of life, 72 per cent of respondents said that chronic pain had a negative effect on their overall quality of life. Other areas that had a negative impact include
 - leisure time, hobbies, sports (77 per cent)
 - work or employment (60 per cent)

- economic situation (54 per cent)
- family relationships (42 per cent)
- 77 per cent believe that their condition is just something they have to live with

Methodology

The Report on Pain was conducted using Leger Marketing's online panel between Wednesday October 13 and Monday, October 25, 2010. A total of 1,717 interviews were completed with Canadian adults, 18 years of age and older. Of these interviews 818 were classified as living with chronic pain and 899 were classified as those who do not live with chronic pain. A probability sample size would yield margins of error of ± 2.4 per cent for 1717 people; ± 3.4 per cent for 818 people; and ± 3.3 per cent for 899 people.

About the Canadian Pain Coalition

The Canadian Pain Coalition (CPC) is *THE National Voice of People with Pain*. Incorporated in 2004 as a not for profit organization, the CPC is a partnership of pain consumer groups, individuals, health professionals who care for people in pain and scientists studying better ways to treat pain. CPC promotes sustained improvement in the understanding, prevention, treatment and management of all types of pain in Canada. CPC accomplishes this through pain education, awareness activities and advocacy initiatives. CPC obtained the Senate Declaration of National Pain Awareness Week in 2004. For more information about the CPC and its programs, including the Pain Resource Centre, please visit our web site at www.canadianpaincoalition.ca.

About Pfizer in Canada

Pfizer Canada Inc. is the Canadian operation of Pfizer Inc., the world's leading biopharmaceutical company. The company is one of the largest contributors to health research in Canada. Pfizer's diversified health care portfolio includes human and animal biologic and small molecule medicines and vaccines, as well as nutritional products and many of the world's best-known consumer products. Every day, Pfizer Canada employees work to advance wellness, prevention, treatments and cures that challenge the most feared diseases of our time. Pfizer Canada applies science and global resources to improve the health and well-being of Canadians at every stage of life. Pfizer's commitment is reflected in everything the company does, from disease awareness initiatives to community partnerships, to the belief that it takes more than medication to be truly healthy. To learn more about Pfizer's *More than Medication* philosophy and programs, visit morethanmedication.ca. To learn more about Pfizer Canada, visit www.pfizer.ca.

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For more information on *The Report on Pain*, or to book an interview with Lynn Cooper, president of the Canadian Pain Coalition, or Dr. John Clark, medical advisor to the Canadian Pain Coalition and Medical Director Pain Services, Capital Health, Halifax, please contact:

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