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New survey highlights carers' crucial role with adults living with schizophrenia

New pan-European survey commissioned by Janssen highlights the need for more education and open dialogue about treatment options for schizophrenia

BEERSE, BELGIUM, 10 October 2016 – On World Mental Health Day, Janssen has announced the results of a pan-European research project: **'Talking About Treatment in Schizophrenia: A Patient and Carer Survey'**. The survey of 166 adults living with schizophrenia and 468 carers was conducted by the independent market research agency, Fieldwork International (part of Ipsos MORI), and explored awareness, feelings and preferences regarding treatment.

The survey, conducted across 12 countries in Europe (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK), highlighted key factors affecting the peace of mind for carers, such as the impact of the condition on day-to-day life, potential relapse/hospitalisation and getting support beyond medication. 94% stated they reminded the person they care for to take their medication and for 49% this happens often.

"Caring for a person with schizophrenia has a significant impact on the carer's life", said Miia Männikko, President of the European Federation of Families of People with Mental Illness (EUFAMI). "These findings support the results of our own *Caring for Carers* survey, which highlighted that one in five carers feel so exhausted they cannot function properly. It is essential that carers are educated about the available treatment options too, so they can help support informed decisions about a personalised treatment plan."

The survey found that adults living with schizophrenia would like improved treatment options as almost a quarter (23%) are dissatisfied with their current therapy; 14% are very dissatisfied. Yet, over a quarter (27%) don't believe they have been made aware of all the treatment options available and a fifth (21%) haven't discussed alternative treatment options with their healthcare professional (HCP) before starting their current treatment.

"Ensuring people living with schizophrenia take their medication as prescribed is crucial to minimising the risk of relapse, which can potentially lead the person to become unwell. As such, they need to feel empowered by their personal treatment plan," said Hilikka Karkkainen, President of Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Networks (GAMIAN)-Europe. "If they express a preference for a treatment, then we would strongly

recommend that HCPs work with them to see whether it is an appropriate option and consider it as part of their treatment plan.”

Treatment is an important aspect in the lives of people living with schizophrenia and their carers, and there are various options available ranging from oral daily to long acting treatments.

“At Janssen, we understand that the most effective treatment solutions come from open and informed discussions between healthcare professionals, people living with schizophrenia and their carers”, said Jane Griffiths, Company Group Chairman, Janssen Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA). “Schizophrenia is a complex illness that can have a profound impact on the individual, as well as on their carer. It is important that all parties are aware of the options available. Treatment should be tailored to the person’s individual requirements, in order to support them in living a fulfilling life.”

Janssen has a long heritage in neuroscience and is committed to improving the lives of people living with mental illness. Over 60 years ago, Janssen discovered one of the first treatments for schizophrenia, it continues to invest in expanding the treatment options and supporting the needs of those affected by serious mental illness.

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About schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a complex and chronic brain disorder, in which symptoms can be severe and disabling and can affect all aspects of a person’s daily life. It affects people from all countries, socio-economic groups and cultures. Its prevalence is similar around the world - almost one person in every 100 will develop schizophrenia before they reach the age of 60, with men slightly more at risk.^{1,2}

There is no single cause of schizophrenia. Different factors acting together are thought to contribute to the development of the illness. Both genetic and environmental factors seem to be important.³ Symptoms of schizophrenia can include hallucinations, delusions, lack of emotional response, social withdrawal/depression, apathy and a lack of drive or initiative.¹

Schizophrenia is typically a lifelong condition, but there are treatments that can be beneficial. Clinical guidelines recommend that the optimal treatment package is a combination of antipsychotic medication along with psychotherapy, psycho-education and self-help.⁴ Effective treatment may allow people with the condition to enjoy a more fulfilling, well rounded life, which may include returning to work or study, independent living and social relationships, which in turn can aid their recovery.⁴

About the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies

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About Fieldwork International

Fieldwork International is a part of Ipsos MORI. Specialising in fieldwork consultancy dedicated to the healthcare industry, it has been the leading force in healthcare market research since 1992. Its vision and goals are to be the healthcare data collection agency of choice, a brand synonymous with top quality service and high level of expertise and knowledge.

With a client base including pharmaceutical companies, market research and PR agencies, charities and universities, it has a number of specialised divisions: quantitative, qualitative, patient research, diary team, translations department, programming and panel management utilising our own physicians panel.

References

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