



Rheumatoid Arthritis Patients Want Pain-Free Days at Christmas

Results from a survey conducted by UCB assessing the lifestyles of women with rheumatoid arthritis in seven major industrialized countries

- **A third of women living with rheumatoid arthritis say their disease impacts their enjoyment of the festive season**
- **Women living with rheumatoid arthritis find shopping for gifts, preparing holiday food, writing cards and wrapping presents most difficult to do**
- **Nearly two thirds of women living with rheumatoid arthritis experience pain daily**

Brussels, December 14th 2009 — A global survey reveals that rheumatoid arthritis (RA) has a severe emotional and physical impact on people living with the disease and their families. Feelings of detachment and isolation from those closest to them due to RA are especially prevalent at Christmas, which should be one of the happiest times of the year. The survey findings of 1,958 women with RA from seven countries worldwide, suggest that 35% of women living with RA feel the disease impacts on their enjoyment of family events during the festive season.

The survey, sponsored by biopharmaceutical company UCB, highlights that 23% of women living with RA find it always painful, more difficult or have stopped attending parties or celebrations due to their condition, and 44% of women with moderate to severe RA report they don't enjoy family events such as Christmas as much as they used to. Even amongst young women (25 – 35 year olds), 28% feel their enjoyment of family events is restricted due to their RA.

Personal relations are also impacted by RA with one third of women believing the condition affects their closest relationships for the worse, and more than half feel that friends and family do not understand their pain.

"The holidays are an occasion to spend fun quality time with family and friends, not a period for anxiety due to busy schedules, social gatherings, and the pain associated with over activity. However, for many women living with RA this isolation and pain is a common feeling," said Dr. Vibeke Strand, Adjunct Clinical Professor, Division of Immunology/Rheumatology of Stanford University School of Medicine. "More often, many prefer to hide their degree of pain and discomfort from family and friends to avoid hindering the festive celebrations which can lead to a feeling of isolation."

Daily pain is an issue – 63% of respondents live with pain – this can be exacerbated by the dexterity needed for even the simplest of Christmas tasks which is illuminated by the survey with 28% of moderate to severe RA respondents always experiencing pain, find it more difficult or have stopped writing cards altogether.

Shopping for gifts, preparing food, writing cards and wrapping presents are the four festive activities that women living with RA find most difficult to do. Among these women,



28% experience pain and difficulty when shopping for gifts, or have stopped altogether, and more than a quarter report it painful to prepare festive food.

"Nearly two thirds of women living with RA experience pain every day which can be more intense during busy times of the year, such as Christmas and this can seriously impact a patient's enjoyment of the festive season. Almost half of patients included in the survey are not talking to their physician about pain control options which is imperative to enable them to take control of their pain, especially around Christmas when pain can be a considerable issue. This will ensure that more patients achieve a pain free 'good day' and ultimately improve their quality of life." Said Professor Paul Emery, Professor of Rheumatology, University of Leeds.

In light of these survey findings UCB has developed the "12 Tips of Christmas" with tips on how to manage and enjoy the hectic holiday season. For further information and the "12 Tips of Christmas" please email 12Tips@fleishman.com for the full guide that details ways to embrace and enjoy the countdown to Christmas.

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For further information

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About the 'Good Days' Survey

The 'Good Days' Survey was conducted in August 2009 as part of a global initiative assessing the lifestyles of women with rheumatoid arthritis in seven major industrialized countries: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Objectives of the Survey included identification of the physical and emotional impact of RA on day-to-day lives of women living with the disease. A component of the Survey examined the affects of the disease on people living with RA during the festive season.

Nearly 2,000 women aged between 25-65 years living with RA for six months or more were interviewed online about the impact of the disease on their lives.

About Rheumatoid Arthritis

It is estimated that 5 million people suffer from RA globally. Prevalence is not split evenly between genders, since women are three times more likely to be affected than men. Although RA can affect people of all ages, the onset of the disease usually occurs between 35-55 years of age.

RA symptoms often lead to restricted mobility and permanent damage and disfigurement of the joints and bones. People living with RA are at a higher risk of developing other conditions, including heart disease, stroke, depression, infections, lung problems and osteoporosis.

About UCB

UCB, Brussels, Belgium (www.ucb.com) is a biopharmaceutical company dedicated to the research, development and commercialization of innovative medicines with a focus on the fields of central nervous system and immunology disorders. Employing approximately 10,000 people in over 40 countries, UCB generated revenue of EUR 3.6 billion in 2008. UCB is listed on Euronext Brussels (symbol: UCB).