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Survey confirms prostate problems overlooked by men and doctors

- 64% of men believe symptoms are an inevitable part of ageing and don't seek help¹

First findings from an online survey of more than 1,000 European men aged 50 and over suggest that men avoid discussing bothersome urinary symptoms, which can significantly affect their quality of life¹ and are often associated with benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH),² a prevalent medical condition.

The BPH survey: a male perspective surveyed 1,161 men in Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the UK and found that:¹

- While men would actively see a doctor about concerns relating to hypertension (73%), heart disease (69%) and diabetes (60%), respondents were reluctant to seek medical advice for their urinary symptoms – 46% said that they had never discussed their bothersome urinary symptoms with a doctor
- For men who had not consulted a doctor about their symptoms, the number one reason for not seeking advice was identified to be a belief that bothersome urinary symptoms are an inevitable part of ageing (reported by 64% of respondents)
- 40% of men who had not sought medical advice said that they would “accept their urinary symptoms” rather than speak to their doctor
- Only 14% of men who had not sought medical advice thought that their doctor could significantly improve their symptoms
- Nearly a third (32%) of men reported that waking up at night with a frequent need to urinate (nocturia) significantly impacted their quality of life and nocturia was the most bothersome urinary symptom reported by men
- Men typically wait almost two years (23 months) before seeking medical advice about their urinary symptoms

Professor Siegfried Meryn, General Secretary of the International Society of Men's Health, explains: “Prostate problems are one of the most common and disruptive health issues faced by older men yet there is a misconception in our society that bothersome urinary symptoms are to be expected as we get older. Men think they should resign themselves to living with symptoms but this simply isn't the case. Healthcare professionals can help, but we have to understand the problem first. This requires open dialogue between men and clinicians.”

For those men who had been diagnosed with BPH, the survey data suggest that many only received a diagnosis because they mentioned their symptoms “in passing”.¹ This suggests that healthcare professionals may need to proactively raise the issue of prostate problems and associated symptoms with men, discussing it like any other chronic condition.

“This survey clearly shows that men don't connect urinary symptoms with prostate problems so don't raise it as a concern with their doctor, even though they experience symptoms that significantly impact upon their lives. Given this, doctors need to take charge of the conversation and dispel myths about urinary problems. Bothersome urinary symptoms are typically experienced when the prostate gland is abnormally large – this should be taken seriously and is not an inevitable part of ageing. It is

something that can be managed,” commented Professor Mark Emberton, Professor in Interventional Oncology, University College London and Associate Professor, Middlesex University, London.

Bothersome urinary symptoms may be experienced due to a man having an enlarged prostate, a condition known as BPH.^{2,3} It is estimated that as many as 24 million European men aged 50 and over experience bothersome urinary symptoms^{4,5} and prostate conditions are among the most common health issues faced by older men.² If left untreated, BPH can lead to chronic and severe complications.² Remarkably, although all of the men surveyed in this project reported experiencing urinary symptoms, only 5% had been diagnosed with BPH.¹ First findings from *The BPH survey: a male perspective* are released today during the Men’s Health World Congress 2011, in Vienna, Austria.

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Notes to Editors

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) is committed to supporting research to help educate and increase understanding of Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH), a common prostate disorder. As part of this commitment GSK has developed and funded this project – “The BPH survey: a male perspective” through the creation of a steering group of healthcare professionals – urologists and GPs – to advise on the content of the survey, as well as the implementation of the project across the largest European markets (UK, France, Italy, Germany and Spain). GSK has supported and paid the International Society of Men’s Health (ISMH) for the opportunity to launch the results of this project in the press contact section of their website during their annual Men’s Health World Congress, taking place in Vienna in 2011. All rights relating to the project and the data published are property of GSK.

Further background information is available to download, providing a short overview of BPH and how the survey was conducted. www.ismh.org/en/press-corner/

References

1. *The BPH survey: a male perspective*. Market research undertaken by Kantar Healthcare, an independent market research company that specialises in medical and pharmaceutical studies, on behalf of GlaxoSmithKline (GSK); Summer 2011; 1,161 men over 50 years of age across France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom completed an online survey as part of the Health and Wellness Survey. Data on file.
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4. European Commission eurostat database – January 2011. Available at: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/population/data/database>. Accessed 28 September 2011 at 11:30 GMT
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