

NATIONAL SURVEY REVEALS GAPS THAT MAY BE PREVENTING OPTIMAL CARE OF DEPRESSION

~ Canadians living with depression significantly underestimate others' perceptions about illness ~

Toronto, ON (September 28, 2010) – A new national survey reveals a vast gap between how Canadians living with depression view their condition, compared to how it is viewed in reality by the general population, possibly preventing them from seeking the best treatment and care. Most Canadians with depression feel their illness is not perceived by the public as a medical condition or a serious illness (81 per cent) when in fact less than five per cent of the general population actually has that view. In fact, the majority of Canadians (72 per cent) recognize depression as both serious and treatable.

“It was a pleasant surprise that the majority of Canadians not only recognize depression is a serious, but treatable illness, but their knowledge of the symptoms is on par with those diagnosed Canadians,” said Phil Upshall, National Executive Director, Mood Disorders Society of Canada. “Our hope is that recognizing that Canadians have a more empathetic view of depression may encourage more individuals living with the illness to take prompt and proper action to help manage their depression.”

Results from the survey show that overall, Canadians with depression are slow to seek professional help. While 90 per cent of those suffering from the illness sensed there was something wrong prior to being diagnosed, nearly half took more than six months to discuss the issue with their healthcare professional and nearly 20 per cent said they were hesitant to take action because they were afraid of the reaction from family and friends.^{1a}

MANAGING PERCEPTIONS OF DEPRESSION IN DAILY LIFE

An estimated three million Canadians will experience depression in their lifetime, and the illness effects on daily life can be devastating. Eight in ten diagnosed Canadians say their depression at least sometimes impacts their ability to function in their social life, including events such as attending social engagements (82 per cent) or leisure activities (80 percent). For those Canadians who have a spouse with depression, 86 per cent state the symptoms have impacted their relationship and 42 per cent state it has been significant.

Depression can strike at any age, but most Canadians that experience depression in their lifetime, will be affected in their working years, between the ages of 24 and 44.² At any one time one in 20 employees can experience depression.³

- more -

NATIONAL SURVEY REVEALS GAPS THAT MAY BE PREVENTING OPTIMAL CARE OF DEPRESSION/2

While the impact on productivity can be significant, employers may not recognize how relationships with co-workers can also be impacting performance. Most (67 per cent) respondents said their depression impacts their relationship with co-workers, with half avoiding contact altogether and nearly 40 per cent spending their non-work, workday hours in areas where no one else is around.^{1b}

Survey findings demonstrate that Canadians are empathetic to those returning to work from disability as a result of their depression; Canadians living with depression report they were most commonly greeted with positive reactions from co-workers saying they either carried on as usual (42 per cent), were understanding and supportive (36 per cent), or offered to assist them with their work (11 per cent).^{1c}

“We are clearly making progress in the understanding and management of depression, however, we need to ensure that this knowledge and empathy towards those diagnosed with depression is translated into action,” said Paula Allen, Vice President, Organizational Solutions, Shepell.fgi. “This survey found that three in ten employers made no accommodation when their employee returned to work and it is imperative that policies are in place that support workers through disability benefits, return to work programs and accommodation. All objectives are met if stigma goes away.”

TAKING ACTION TO MANAGE DEPRESSION

With proper diagnosis and treatment, people are able to manage their depression. For Canadians that do seek help, anti-depressant use is the most common approach to managing depression (92 per cent) , followed by talk therapy or counseling (71 per cent) and through diet, exercise and/or light therapy (45 per cent).^{1d}

“The good news is, satisfaction with medication is high, and those who discontinued treatment did so because they felt better and no longer required medication,” said Dr. Jeff Habert commenting on the finding that 95 per cent of diagnosed Canadians report their current medication is effective.^{1e} “What is concerning, is that on average, those who stopped taking their medication did so about six years ago, many because of side-effects, or fear of them.^{1f} And along with increased awareness and changing attitudes , we’ve made great advancements with newer and better-tolerated medications.”

NATIONAL SURVEY REVEALS GAPS THAT MAY BE PREVENTING OPTIMAL CARE OF DEPRESSION/3

SURVEY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Conducted by Leger Marketing and sponsored by Pfizer Canada in partnership with Mood Disorders Society of Canada and Shepell.fgi, the survey consisted of two online questionnaires: one survey was conducted among Canadian adults diagnosed with depression; the other, among general population adult Canadians.

The survey of diagnosed Canadians was conducted in May 2010 using a national random sample of 810 respondents from a medical web panel who have been diagnosed with depression.

The survey of general population adult Canadians was conducted in May 2010 using a national random sample of 1587 respondents from Leger Marketing's web panel.

ABOUT MOOD DISORDERS SOCIETY OF CANADA

The Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) is a national, not for profit, consumer driven, voluntary health charity committed to ensuring that the voice of consumers, family members and caregivers is heard on issues relating to mental health and mental illness and in particular with regard to depression, bipolar illness and other associated mood disorders. Its website – www.mooddisorderscanada.ca – provides resources and support on depression and other types of mood disorders.

ABOUT SHEPELL.FGI

For more than 30 years, Shepell.fgi has been Canada's leading provider of health and productivity solutions. Serving 7,000 clients and more than eight million employees and family members, Shepell.fgi strengthens the health of people and organizations across North America and internationally.

NATIONAL SURVEY REVEALS GAPS THAT MAY BE PREVENTING OPTIMAL CARE OF DEPRESSION/4

ABOUT PFIZER CANADA INC.

Pfizer Canada Inc. is the Canadian operation of Pfizer Inc, one of the world's leading biopharmaceutical company. Pfizer discovers, develops, manufactures and markets prescription medicines for humans and animals.

Pfizer Inc invests more than US\$7 billion annually in R&D to discover and develop innovative life-saving and life-enhancing medicines in a wide range of therapeutic areas. Our diversified 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. For more information, visit www.pfizer.ca.

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Carolyn Santillan/Jennifer Dolan
Edelman
Tel: 416-979-1120, ext. 5258, 5330
carolyn.santillan@edelman.com / jennifer.dolan@edelman.com

References:

- ¹ Year 2: National Survey on Depression. Leger Marketing on behalf of Pfizer Canada. 2010.
- ² Canadian Mental Health Association. http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=3-86-87-91. Accessed August 20, 2010.
- ³ Canadian Mental Health Association. http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=3-86-87-91&lang=1. Accessed September 2, 2010.