

World MS Day 2013 motto: “Young people with MS”

A survey reveals that two in five European persons with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) under 35 are unable to work or study due to their illness

- **Four in ten young persons with MS believe that their country’s welfare system does not provide them with adequate support**
- **84 percent of young adults with MS said that the disease affected their ability to take part in social events and activities. Also, half of them have found that MS has negatively affected their relationships**
- **The survey was conducted in Germany, Spain, Italy and Norway and involved anonymous online interviews with 200 persons with MS aged between 18 and 35.**

Barcelona, 29th May 2013: According to the results of a recent survey to mark World MS Day, MS prevents around two in five sufferers under 35 years from working or studying. Moreover, four in ten young persons interviewed believe that their country’s welfare system does not provide them with adequate support.

The survey, which examined the experiences of a sample of 200 young persons with MS aged between 18 and 35 from 4 different countries (Germany, Spain, Italy and Norway), also revealed that the disease is having a real impact on their social lives and relationships: 84 percent of participants believe that MS negatively impacts on their ability to take part in social activities, while two thirds of them have had to stop taking part in hobbies. In addition, half of all respondents considered that the illness has also negatively affected their relationships.

“As well as the many physical symptoms, it is clear from these results that MS is having a much wider impact on young people’s lives, especially in terms of their ability to fulfil their career or academic ambitions and to fully interact with society. Given that it is such a socially isolating illness, governments, patient organisations and pharmaceutical companies need to work together to ensure that young MS sufferers have access to adequate support and care,” says Dr. Carlos Vila, Global Medical Manager Central Nervous System at Almirall.

The most commonly experienced symptoms of MS were fatigue and impaired vision, while over half of those interviewed suffer from other highly impairing such as spasticity, muscle spasms, pain, dizziness and balance problems, impaired movement, or difficulty in sleeping. Other common symptoms might include concentration problems, bladder disorders, depression, sexual dysfunction and anxiety. Due to their impairment, 71% of persons interviewed need support from relatives or carers every day and 56% have contact with their local patient association to get support (especially how to cope with their disease and learn to live with it).

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Notes to Editors

Survey methodology

Study data is based on all 200 interviews completed for the project using a phone data collection methodology. All information was anonymous and collected in an appropriately sensitive nature given the audience. Fifty interviews were undertaken in each country (Germany, Italy, Spain and Norway). Interviews were undertaken in May 2013 and only included MS sufferers aged between 18 and 35, although they may have had other ailments as well. Controls by gender were also applied.

About MS

MS is one of the most common neurological disorders and causes of disability in young adults. It affects more than 600,000 people in Europeⁱ and an estimated two million people worldwide, although it is likely that many hundreds of thousands around the world remain undiagnosed.ⁱⁱ Most people with MS are diagnosed between the ages of 25 and 31, with approximately twice as many women diagnosed than men. The progression of the disease and associated symptoms are unpredictable and can vary widely among individuals. It is not yet known what causes MS and as yet, there is no cure.

About MS-related Spasticity

Spasticity is a symptom defined by patients and carers as experiencing muscle spasms, stiffness, rigidity and/or impaired movement, and is one of the most common symptoms of MS, occurring in as many as 75% of sufferers. Spasticity can affect many aspects of MS patients' daily lives, and is a major contributor to their distress and disability.ⁱⁱⁱ

About Almirall

Almirall is a pharmaceutical company committed to provide valuable medicines from its own R&D, external partnerships, licenses and collaborations. In 2012, Almirall invested over 23% of its sales in R&D. Through seeking innovative medicines we aim to become a relevant player in respiratory and dermatology diseases with also a strong interest in gastroenterology and pain. With around 3,000 employees in 22 countries, Almirall generated total revenues of 900 million Euros in 2012.

The company was founded in 1943 and is headquartered in Barcelona, Spain. The stock is traded in the Spanish stock exchange (ticker: ALM).

For further information please visit the website at: www.almirall.com

ⁱ European Multiple Sclerosis Platform. MS Barometer 2011. www.EMSP.org Last accessed 20.05.13.

ⁱⁱ Multiple Sclerosis International Federation. Atlas of MS Database. www.atlasofms.org, Last accessed 20.05.2013.

ⁱⁱⁱ Rizzo MA Hadjimichael OC, Preiningerova J, *et al.* Prevalence and treatment of spasticity reported by multiple sclerosis patients. *Mult Scler* 2004; 10:589-595.