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Pain is a throbbing public health crisis affecting 8 out of 10 Canadians

CALGARY, May 13

New survey reveals high prevalence of pain and lack of adequate treatment in Canada

CALGARY, May 13 /CNW/ - A new national survey shows that 85 per cent of adult Canadians experienced at least one episode of moderate to severe pain within the past three months. Almost one third (30 per cent) of respondents reported they experienced pain either daily or at least a few days each week. The study also revealed that over half of the individuals (55 per cent) that experienced moderate to severe pain reported they had not sought treatment for their pain from a health professional in the past three months. Among those seeking treatment, 31 per cent reported they were dissatisfied with the treatment they received.

"Pain is a growing health and economic crisis in Canada that will only intensify as our population ages. A huge number of Canadians are experiencing severe to moderate pain on a daily basis and we simply do not have adequate resources in place to provide necessary treatment," says Dr. Roman Jovey, painexplained.ca steering committee member and past president of the Canadian Pain Society (CPS). "Pain is still misunderstood and under-treated. As a result, Canadians are suffering needless pain that costs the economy as much as heart disease or cancer in lost productivity. We know what needs to be done in Canada to treat pain more effectively but lack the political will to do so."

Many Canadians are treating their own pain, sometimes using unhealthy methods. The study revealed that one in six (18 per cent) Canadians admitted to using alcohol, illegal narcotics or non-prescribed medications for pain treatment. Of the individuals who had experienced moderate to severe pain within the last three months, the majority (81 per cent) reported using over-the-counter products, such as ibuprofen, to treat their pain. Half of the individuals (50 per cent) used alternative treatments such as vitamins, exercise, massage therapy and other forms of alternative treatments which did provide some relief.

"As a person who lives with daily pain I know pain is a very real, life-altering condition affecting a high proportion of individuals. We need to coordinate efforts to ensure that pain is recognized as a health priority in Canada and to make certain Canadians have access to information and resources, to help them better manage their pain," said Lynn Cooper, painexplained.ca steering committee member and president of the Canadian Pain Coalition (CPC).

The research conducted by Leger Marketing surveyed 1,033 adult Canadians on behalf of painexplained.ca, an advocacy and awareness campaign committed to raising awareness of the problem of under-treated pain in Canada.

Pain can be a debilitating struggle that goes beyond personal experiences; it also has a serious impact on our economy. Chronic pain affects 60 per cent of sufferers through loss of income, related to reduced work hours or actual job loss.(1) Among those still working, pain results in an average number of 28.5 lost work days per year.(2)

The results of Leger's survey highlight that a high percentage of Canadians frequently deal with moderate to severe pain. The shortage of treatment options and lack of dedicated research and resources available to Canadians is compounding this health crisis. More awareness and greater access to resources are required to help diminish this needless suffering.

painexplained.ca survey methodology

This national omnibus survey was conducted using a random sample of 1,033 respondents from Leger Marketing's web panel between April 13 and 15, 2010. This method simulates a probability sample which would yield a maximum margin of error of +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20.

About painexplained.ca (www.painexplained.ca)

painexplained.ca is an awareness and advocacy campaign founded by the Canadian Pain Society, Canadian Pain Coalition, and the Canadian Pain Foundation. The www.painexplained.ca initiative seeks to promote awareness of the issue of under treated pain in Canada through a long-term, coordinated public awareness campaign with the goal of addressing the vital need to achieve better understanding, prevention and management of all types of pain in Canada.

<< ----- (1) Chronic Pain Survey. Nanos Research, sponsored by painexplained.ca. (2007-2008) (2)

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