



PAN European Psoriasis Patients Organization Forum

# Media Release

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## **PSORIASIS PATIENTS SUFFERING IN SILENCE**

*Results from a quality of life survey show that psoriasis patients endure unnecessary distress that could be relieved by modern treatments*

- New research indicates that despite the distress caused by psoriasis, patients are not seeking treatment as soon as they could
- Awareness of and access to psoriasis treatments that could restore a normal life to patients is not high enough
- Access to biological systemic medicines early in a patient's treatment schedule may lead to skin clearance and dramatic improvements in quality of life
- Patients eligible for biologics are not receiving these treatments and are remaining on sub-optimal treatments for prolonged periods

The debilitating nature of psoriasis can inflict a considerable impact on the livelihoods and careers of 65% of its sufferers. Despite this fact, many psoriasis patients wait an average of 6 months to a year prior to seeking treatment for the condition, as shown by results obtained from recent research surveying the quality of life of 11924 psoriasis patients across 19 European countries. Diseases and disorders associated with psoriasis such as Crohn's disease, psoriatic arthritis and cardiovascular disease compound the distress experienced by patients.

Wyeth provided an unrestricted educational grant to PePsoPOF for the study to be undertaken



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The survey shows that the majority (approximately 70%) of patients who live with psoriasis are not aware of the range of new and effective treatments which have the potential to not merely relieve symptoms, but can also help them return to a normal life. Even when patients are aware of and eligible for such treatments they may have to behave very assertively with their physician to ensure they receive them. By empowering patients and raising their awareness of newer treatments such as systemic biologics the distress and limitation caused by psoriasis could be relieved, as well as the symptoms.

The quality of life survey has revealed the unmet needs of psoriasis patients who remain on sub-optimal treatment regimens for prolonged periods of time. The results emphasize the importance of the role of the dermatologist in prescribing medicines including the systemic biologics as early as possible in a treatment schedule. The extensive skin clearance and resulting improvement in quality of life such medicines can produce are key, realistic benefits.

### **About the psoriasis quality of life survey**

The psoriasis quality of life survey was distributed to psoriasis patient organizations in 19 European countries and surveyed 11924 individual patients. The main objectives were to explore the perspective of patients on the impact psoriasis has on their lifestyle, emotional wellbeing, employment and social conditions and also on the effectiveness of the currently available therapies. The full results of the study are expected to be announced at the 17<sup>th</sup> European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology Congress to be held in Paris, 17-21 September 2008.

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### **About psoriasis**

Psoriasis is a serious, chronic, systemic disease that can cause debilitating discomfort and distress. It is a genetic skin disease that results when faulty signals in the immune system prompt skin cells to regenerate too quickly, causing red, scaly lesions that itch, crack and bleed. It often affects the elbows, knees, scalp and torso, but can appear anywhere on the body. There is increasing evidence suggesting links with serious health concerns such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, liver disease, depression and obesity. Psoriasis affects around 5% of the population of Europe with an average age of onset between 20 and 35 years. Seventy-five percent of all cases occur for the first time before the age of 40 years. Approximately 10 to 30% of those with psoriasis develop painful psoriatic arthritis. As an immune-mediated disease, psoriasis usually requires long-term treatment for control.

### **About PE.Pso.POF**

PE.Pso.POF (Pan European Psoriasis Patient Organization Forum) was founded in Rome in July 2005. The purpose of PE.Pso.POF is to increase awareness and understanding of both psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis throughout Europe, particularly in Eastern Europe where discrimination of psoriasis sufferers is widespread. By raising awareness in these areas the organization aims to improve access to treatment and challenge any discrimination that may be experienced by psoriasis sufferers, both socially and in the workplace.

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