



**Media Contact:
Phyllis Milligan
(212) 614-5142**

National NSAID Ulcer Risk Awareness Survey Backgrounder

Millions of U.S. adults suffer from chronic pain. Among the most commonly used pain treatments are a class of drugs called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen, naproxen or aspirin. These drugs are effective in reducing pain, but also carry the risk of stomach ulcers with continued use.

Survey Overview

The NSAID Ulcer Risk Awareness survey assessed the awareness and attitudes of 1,269 U.S. adults age 55+ with chronic pain about NSAID-related ulcer risk. The survey was conducted between June 7 and 17, 2005.

Survey Key Findings

- The majority of respondents (**65 percent**) are aware that stomach ulcers are a common side effect of pain medications, but only about one-third (**31 percent**) actually perceive themselves to be at moderate to high risk of developing one over the next 10 years.
- **Forty-five percent** of survey respondents take over-the-counter or prescription NSAIDs four or more days a week. NSAIDs, as defined in the survey, include:
 - Over-the-counter ibuprofen, naproxen or aspirin
 - Traditional prescription NSAIDs such as ibuprofen, naproxen or aspirin
 - COX-2 inhibitors
- **Seventy-three percent** of survey respondents are 60 years of age or older.
- **Seventeen percent** have been diagnosed with an ulcer by a health care provider.

The survey also found that:

- Among chronic pain sufferers age 55 + who opt **not** to take pain medication to treat their condition, **53 percent** say that side effects are a concern.
- **Sixty-five percent** of respondents believe that stomach ulcers/damage to the stomach lining are a common side effect of taking pain medications
- **Sixty-three percent** are confused about which pain medications cause stomach ulcers
- **Twenty-nine percent** mistakenly think that a stomach ulcer **always** has symptoms

About Survey Respondents

- **Forty-eight percent** of survey respondents have been dealing with chronic pain for 10+ years
- **Sixty percent** of survey respondents say their pain is severe and **58 percent** feel that it has negatively impacted their lives
- **Ninety percent** are currently treating their pain with medications
- **Seventy-one percent** of those who take a medication for their chronic pain take either a prescription or over-the-counter pain reliever at least once a day

Background on NSAID Ulcer Risk

According to the American College of Gastroenterology, as many as 25 percent of those who take NSAIDs (including aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen) on a continuous basis may develop stomach ulcers, even without symptoms. Factors that may place people at increased risk of a stomach ulcer includeⁱ:

- Continuous NSAID use
- Increasing age
- A history of ulcer or GI complications
- Alcohol use

Each year, gastrointestinal complications caused by medications known as NSAIDs lead to more than 100,000 hospitalizations and 16,500 deaths in the United States, according to a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*ⁱⁱ. NSAIDs include prescription and over-the-counter medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen.

**It is important to discuss the benefits and risks of any treatment options with your doctor. For more information visit www.managingyourrisk.org.*

Methodology

Harris Interactive[®] conducted the online survey on behalf of the American Chronic Pain Association and was underwritten by AstraZeneca. The survey was conducted between June 7 and 17, 2005 among 1,269 U.S. adults aged 55+ who have experienced chronic pain for at least four months. The data were weighted to be representative of the total U.S. adult population age 55+ with chronic pain on the basis of age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity, region, and propensity to be online. In theory, with probability samples of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results have a sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. adult population aged 55 and over who have experienced chronic pain for at least four months had been polled with complete accuracy. Sampling error for the sub-sample of those who do not use medication to treat their chronic pain (124) is plus or minus 9 percentage points. This online sample is not a probability sample.

About Harris Interactive®

Harris Interactive Inc. (www.harrisinteractive.com) is the 13th largest and fastest-growing market research firm in the world, perhaps best known for *The Harris Poll*® and for pioneering and engineering Internet-based research methods. The Rochester, New York–based global research company blends premier strategic consulting with innovative and efficient methods of investigation, analysis and application, conducting proprietary and public research globally to help clients achieve clear, material and enduring results. Blending science and art, Harris Interactive combines its intellectual capital and one of the world’s largest online panels of respondents, with premier Internet survey technology and sophisticated research methods to market leadership through its US, Europe (www.harrisinteractive.com/europe) and Asia offices, its wholly owned subsidiary, Novatris in Paris (www.novatris.com), and through an independent global network of affiliate market research companies. EOE M/F/D/V

About American Chronic Pain Association

Since 1980, the American Chronic Pain Association has worked to help individuals with chronic pain to regain a higher quality of life. The ACPA’s mission is:

- To facilitate peer support and education for individuals with chronic pain and their families so that these individuals may live more fully in spite of their pain.
- To raise awareness among the health care community, policy makers, and the public at large about issues of living with chronic pain.

The ACPA offers peer support groups for people with pain; print and video materials that teach pain management skills; public awareness outreach programs dealing with key pain-related issues; and a quarterly newsletter, the *ACPA Chronicle*. The ACPA web site at www.theacpa.org, provides an introduction to pain management skills, resources for learning more about specific conditions, information for professionals, and news briefs for anyone interested in pain management. The ACPA is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization.

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ⁱ Laine, Loren. Approaches to Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drug Use in the High-Risk Patient. *Gastroenterology*; 2001; 120(3): 594-606

ⁱⁱ Wolfe MM, Lichtenstein DR, Singh G. Gastrointestinal toxicity of nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs. *N Engl J Med* 1999;340:1888–99.