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Majority of Older Adults with Chronic Pain Know Stomach Ulcers are A Common Side Effect of Pain Medications, But Most Don't Think They're at High Risk

Survey of U.S. Adults 55 + with Chronic Pain Suggests Need for More Education

ROCKLIN, Ca., October 12, 2005 – Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of U.S. adults age 55+ with chronic pain know that stomach ulcers are a common side effect of certain pain medications, yet less than one-third (31 percent) perceive themselves to be at moderate or high risk for developing one over the next 10 years. Despite this perception, many adults age 55+ have one or more factors that put them at increased risk for stomach ulcers that can result from chronic use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) including aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen. The survey also found that among people who suffer with chronic pain age 55+ who opt not to take pain medication, more than half (53 percent) say that side effects are a concern.

“People with pain need to know about the risks associated with their medication,” said Penney Cowan, Executive Director of the American Chronic Pain Association. “The good news is that knowledge is power, and if side effects are understood they can be properly managed.”

The online survey found that many adults age 55+ were at increased risk for an NSAID-related stomach ulcer.ⁱ For example, almost half (45 percent) of the survey respondents take over-the-counter or prescription NSAIDs four or more times a week, 73 percent are age 60 or older and nearly one in five (17 percent) has been diagnosed by a health care provider with an ulcer in the past.

According to the American College of Gastroenterology, NSAID use is the second major cause of gastric ulcers. In the United States, gastrointestinal complications caused by NSAIDs result in more than 100,000 hospitalizations and an estimated 16,500 deaths annually.ⁱⁱ This figure rivals the number of deaths per year from either AIDS, liver or ovarian cancer and is more than twice that of deaths from cervical cancer.ⁱⁱⁱ

“A big step in reducing the number of NSAID-related ulcers and hospitalizations is education,” said H. Juergen Nord, M.D., Professor of Medicine, University of South Florida College of Medicine. “People need to talk with their healthcare provider about factors that put them at greater risk and make an informed decision about their treatment. There are medications that reduce the amount of acid the stomach produces or protect the stomach lining and lower the risk of developing NSAID-related ulcers.”

Key Survey Findings

- A recent survey of U.S. adults 55 and older with chronic pain finds that although many are aware of the serious side effects associated with common pain medications, few perceive themselves to be at high risk for developing a stomach ulcer in the next 10 years.
 - 65 percent of U.S. adults 55 and older with chronic pain know stomach ulcers are a common side effect of pain medications.
 - 93 percent think they are not at high risk or are not sure of their risk for stomach ulcers caused by pain medication.
- Many respondents have factors that put people with chronic pain at increased risk for NSAID related stomach ulcers. ^{iv}
 - Almost half (45 percent) take over-the-counter or prescription NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) four or more days a week.
 - 73 percent are 60 years or older.
 - One in five (17 percent) have been diagnosed with an ulcer by a health care provider
- Among those who opt not to take medication for their chronic pain, more than half (53 percent) say that side effects are a concern.
- People who suffer with chronic pain age 55+ have typically lived with chronic pain for about 8 years and three out of five (60 percent) describe their pain as at least somewhat severe.
- 58 percent of respondents believe their condition has had a great negative impact on their life.
- 90 percent of adults age 55 and over with chronic pain are actively treating their pain with medications
- 71 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

People with pain taking NSAIDs continuously should talk to their doctor about ways to reduce their risk and visit www.managingyourrisk.org for more information.

Knowing Your Risk Factors and Options

Factors that may increase the risk of NSAID-associated GI complications include:

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

The survey was conducted by Harris Interactive[®] on behalf of the American Chronic Pain Association (ACPA) and was underwritten by AstraZeneca. As part of its 25th Anniversary, the ACPA has launched the Ulcer Risk Awareness campaign to raise awareness of NSAID-ulcer risk and has planned a series of educational events and activities will be launched throughout the year. For more information on NSAID ulcer risk, talk to your doctor and visit www.managingyourrisk.org or call 800.533.3231.

About the 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.

Methodology

Harris Interactive® conducted the online survey on behalf of AstraZeneca 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), the 13th largest market research firm in the world, is a Rochester, NY-based global research company that blends premier strategic consulting with innovative and efficient methods of investigation, analysis and application. Known for The Harris Poll® and for pioneering Internet-based research methods, Harris Interactive conducts proprietary and public research to help its clients achieve clear, material and enduring results. Harris Interactive combines its intellectual capital, databases and technology to advance market leadership through its U.S. offices and wholly owned subsidiaries, HI Europe in London (www.hieurope.com), Novatris in Paris (www.novatris.com), and through an independent global network of affiliate market research companies. EOE M/F/D/V.

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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 non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. *N Engl J Med* 1999;340:1888-99.

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