

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Survey Finds Unique Challenge for Male Fibromyalgia Sufferers**

*Under-reporting or misreporting of symptoms may affect the general understanding of fibromyalgia symptoms in men*

**Washington, DC** (April 20, 2010) – Men's Health Network (MHN) releases the results of an online survey to gauge awareness, knowledge, and interest of men in taking action, being proactive and learning more about fibromyalgia as patients. The survey, open on the MHN website from August 18, 2009 – October 27, 2009, yielded 1,005 participants (790 men and 215 women). A majority of respondents had been diagnosed with fibromyalgia. Findings include:

- A majority of respondents felt that healthcare providers are “NOT EFFECTIVE” at recognizing signs and symptoms of fibromyalgia.
- A majority of the patients who said they were “MISDIAGNOSED” with symptoms/conditions including depression and arthritis.
- 74% of respondents felt depression was a common symptom (and co-existing conditions) of fibromyalgia. 51% widespread pain and tender points, 50% fatigue and sleep disturbances, 41% headaches, and 34% irritable bowel syndrome.
- If experiencing symptoms of fibromyalgia, over 70% of respondents would not contact a doctor right away.
- 56% of respondents felt that a man's experience with fibromyalgia was different than female's.

At present, the estimated ratio of female to male patients with fibromyalgia is 8:1. However, this ratio is considered by some to be inaccurate, given the fact that large numbers of men who show signs of fibromyalgia are rarely diagnosed with the disorder simply because they are men. Recent experts suggest that men may account for up to 30% of all fibromyalgia cases.

According to survey respondents, a man's experience with fibromyalgia is different than a female's experience because men are less likely to admit pain and see a doctor, there is not enough fibromyalgia research specific to men, and women get more support because fibromyalgia is known as a woman's disease, among others.

Fibromyalgia in men (and women) causes absenteeism and presenteeism issues in the workplace, relationship/family troubles at home, and struggles with pain, fatigue, GI disorders, and headaches. In addition to the unique challenges for men as sufferers of fibromyalgia, men who serve as caregivers for the women and loved ones in their lives also need tailored support.

Survey results suggest that men need to know more about the signs and symptoms of fibromyalgia and efforts need to be undertaken to combat the social and cultural barriers preventing men from making healthcare provider visits about fibromyalgia.

### **About Men's Health Network**

Men's Health Network ([www.menshealthnetwork.org](http://www.menshealthnetwork.org)) is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to reach men and their families where they live, work, play, and pray with health

prevention messages and tools, screening programs, educational materials, advocacy opportunities, and patient navigation.

SOURCE Men's Health Network

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