Alarmingly Low Awareness of Urology Across Europe

Arnhem (The Netherlands), 24 September 2018 - Public awareness of urological conditions is alarmingly low throughout Europe. Results of a new international survey of more than 2,500 respondents in five European countries[1] show that women know more about men's health issues than men do, men have poor knowledge of key urological symptoms and don't take early signs of potentially life-threatening urological conditions seriously.

The low level of awareness indicated by the survey is of particular concern as urological conditions are on a rise due to the ageing European population. Prevention and early diagnosis are crucial to save lives and to control increasing costs.

Fundamental Lack of Knowledge of Urology

Responses showed that urology as a medical speciality still has a long way to go to reach general awareness: 40% of respondents were unable to identify what a urologist does, 10% stated that they had never even heard of a urologist and almost 15% believe that a urologist treats disorders of the skeletal, nervous or circulatory systems.

> "The results of our latest survey clearly demonstrate that people are ill-informed when it comes to urological conditions. Men in particular have less knowledge than women and turn a blind eye to symptoms and early diagnosis" comments Prof. Hein Van Poppel, urologist and Adjunct Secretary General of the EAU. "Persuading men to take their health seriously presents a serious challenge. They need to have a better understanding of the risk and symptoms of their conditions. They should be encouraged to seek support from a medical professional if they suspect anything unusual."

The Prostate Remains a Mystery to Many Men

Every year, almost 450,000 men across the continent will be diagnosed with prostate cancer, leading to 92,000 deaths in Europe2. Despite prostate cancer being the most common cancer in males throughout Europe, three quarters of men admitted that they have limited knowledge of its symptoms. Men are, in fact, more confident in recognising the symptoms of breast cancer (31%) than they are of prostate cancer (27%).

In addition to the low awareness of prostate cancer symptoms, just 1 in 4 respondents could correctly identify the location of the prostate and surprisingly, a higher proportion of women (28%) were able to identify the location of the prostate than males (22%). Worryingly, 54% of men believe that women have prostates.

Erectile Dysfunction and Incontinence Still Taboos

Erectile dysfunction (ED) prevalence in Europe is estimated at 50%3 of the sexually active men of 50 years and older. However, the topic remains a taboo leading to misunderstanding and ignorance. 75% of the respondents were not aware of the numbers of men that suffer from erectile dysfunction in their country. Similarly, 85% were unaware of the amount of people in their country that suffer from urinary tract issues.

> "Men's health issues involve partners too", says Prof. Van Poppel. "Women are more used to checking their bodies. They should encourage men to do the same and discuss their health more in detail. Women should actively participate in conversations with their male partners and doctors."

International Differences in Testicular Cancer Knowledge

Testicular cancer is the most common type of cancer to affect younger men. However, survey results stated that only 18% of male respondents knew that men aged 16 to 44 years have the highest risk. Whilst knowledge was found to be low throughout Europe, there were stark differences; only 10% of the respondents from Spain know the at-risk age group compared to 27% in the UK.

Symptom awareness was also low with 70% of men lacking confidence in recognising the symptoms of testicular cancer, which may include a swelling or lump in one of the testicles and a dull ache or sharp pain in the testicles or scrotum.

Significant Delays in Visiting the Doctor

Symptom awareness is recognised as a leading factor in the early diagnosis of urological conditions. The majority of deaths in male cancers occur because most men do not address their conditions in time. Despite this, they continue to ignore their symptoms and delay seeing their doctors.

The survey reveals that 43% of people would not go to their doctor straight away if they notice blood in their urine; 23% would

wait longer than a month if they suffered a frequent urge to urinate; 28% would wait for more than a week if they suffered burning or pain during urination; and only 17% of people surveyed associate pain in their lower abdomen with a serious problem.

Professor of urology and Executive Member for Communications at the EAU, Manfred Wirth adds “Urological diseases are extremely common; they cause a lot of discomfort and at times, can be life-threatening. It’s time for Europe to change its attitude towards urology and invest in educational campaigns to increase urological knowledge and to break taboos.”

About the survey

The new survey, commissioned by the European Association of Urology (EAU) for its annual Urology Week (24-28 September), asked over 2,500 members of the public from France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom to assess knowledge of a range of urological conditions concerning Men’s Health. The survey was conducted by Censuswide and supported by an educational grant of Boston Scientific.

Breakdown of 2,575 respondents per country:

- France: 529 (data available in 7 regions)
- Germany: 507 (data available in 16 regions)
- Italy: 520 (data available in 20 regions)
- Spain: 514 (data available in 17 regions)
- UK: 505 (data available in 12 regions)

Dates information was sourced: 30-31 July 2018

Notes to Editors

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About the European Association of Urology (EAU)

The European Association of Urology is a non-profit organisation which supports medical professionals working in the field of urology through many of its scientific, professional, educational and awareness-building initiatives. The overarching mission is to raise the level of urological care in Europe, and for many years this has been done through educational and scientific programmers aimed at urologists. Today the EAU represents more than 16,000 medical professionals working in Europe and beyond its borders. For more information see www.uroweb.org

About Urology Awareness Week

Urology Week is an EAU initiative which brings together national urological societies, urology practitioners, urology nurses, the patients and their families, and politicians to create awareness of urological conditions among the general public. For more information see https://urologyweek.org

About Boston Scientific

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