Fibromyalgia Association UK
raising awareness of FM in the UK

Fibromyalgia International Awareness Day May 12

Fibromyalgia Association UK calls for greater awareness and education to help thousands of diagnosed patients in the UK

London, May 12th – Fibromyalgia Association UK (FMA UK) today calls upon MPs at a closed session at the House of Commons to request for greater research into the level of fibromyalgia suffering in the UK. Campaigners for the charity, predominately run by volunteers, demand a clearer assessment on the extent of the condition ahead of an official review by NICE in 2016.

The annual awareness day marks the release of a recent study by PIP Health on behalf of FMA UK into the levels of satisfaction of patient diagnosis and treatment. Notably:

- Over half of sufferers rated their treatment as *poor or very poor* [1]
- Only 23% said the treatment process was *good* or *excellent* [1]

The research also highlights how patients' frustrations are exacerbated by inappropriate and irrational use of medicines not approved by the UK in a search for pain relief[1]. Insufficient research and development of treatments has left many patients without hope of recovery.

A referral for physiotherapy is quite common but not all physiotherapists understand fibromyalgia and inappropriate levels of exercise are often given resulting in more pain and therefore less mobility. Alternative therapies are also a popular treatment, and although this can see beneficial results for the sufferer, these treatment are limited on the NHS.

The only previous existing study by Harris Interactive[2] presented at the European Parliament in 2008 showed that 82% of primary care physicians and 63% of specialists in the UK reported that they had little or no fibromyalgia training. In fact the UK had the worst results compared with France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands. Results from the new study would suggest there has been little or no improvement.

Pam Stewart, Chair of Trustees at Fibromyalgia Association UK said, "Today we ask MPs for immediate action. For too long the disease has experienced a lack of investment in research, limiting understanding but now we stand at the forefront of the debate, representing all interested parties, asking for a commitment from Government to address this important and challenging disease.

"A change is needed in how healthcare professionals perceive fibromyalgia. Better standards of treatment would prevent thousands suffering at the hand of the disease, who are unable to leave the house, go to work and no longer able to look after their families."

These findings highlight the urgent need to tackle escalating numbers of people suffering from a large number of symptoms that attack patients. At present there is very little research being carried out in the UK and sufferers are told there is no cure.

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About Fibromyalgia Association UK

FMA UK raises awareness of fibromyalgia by providing information to the general public, people with fibromyalgia, medical professionals and politicians. We also support research into all aspects of fibromyalgia. Through these initiatives we hope to improve the availability of effective treatment for this painful disease.

www.FMAUK.org

About Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition of widespread pain and profound fatigue. The pain tends to be felt as diffuse aching or burning, often described as head to toe. It may be worse at some times than at others. It may also change location, usually becoming more severe in parts of the body that are used the most. The fatigue ranges from feeling tired, to the exhaustion of a flu-like illness. It may come and go and people can suddenly feel drained of all energy - as if someone just "pulled the plug".

Media Contacts

Pam Stewart, 07796 616269

References

[1] Fibromyalgia in the UK Patient Intelligence Report conducted by PIP Health on behalf of FMA UK.

[2] Fibromyalgia Global Impact Study Advancing Understanding, Aiding Diagnosis, 2008, Harris Interactive, http://www.enfa-europe.eu/assets/downloads/global.pdf