

PRESS RELEASE

ABBVIE UK LAUNCHES NEW CAMPAIGN IN BATH CITY CENTRE TO RAISE AWARENESS OF INFLAMMATORY BACK PAIN

- *Acrobatic display brings to life the importance of a strong and healthy spine*

Maidenhead, Berkshire, 15 September 2014 - A new awareness campaign, '*Don't Turn Your Back On It*', arrived in SouthGate, Bath on Saturday to raise awareness of inflammatory back pain and the impact it can have on people's lives. A group of acrobats performed a routine of somersaults, balance and body contortion to bring to life the importance of having a strong and healthy spine.

The campaign hopes to help people suffering from chronic lower back pain to identify the cause of their pain; anyone who has had back pain for more than 3 months is encouraged to visit the campaign website, www.dtyb.co.uk, to complete a short Symptom Checker to assess if their back pain may be inflammatory in type. The results can then be discussed with their doctor. Further information about the campaign, types and causes of back pain and educational resources offering insights into the lives of people living with chronic back pain are also available on the website.

Approximately one in five adults are currently experiencing chronic lower back pain – back pain that lasts for more than 3 months.^{1,2} In most cases, chronic back pain is mechanical, which is often caused by a strain or an injury. However, approximately 3% of all adults in the UK have chronic back pain caused by inflammation³, which may need to be managed differently.

"Most inflammatory back pain is caused by certain autoimmune conditions and can seriously affect people's lives from a physical, emotional and social perspective," said Debbie Cook, Chief Executive of the National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society. "Early diagnosis and appropriate management of these autoimmune conditions, such as axial spondyloarthritis and ankylosing spondylitis, is vital to help avoid the long-term and sometimes permanent damage they can cause."

In some cases, it can take up to 10 years for the cause of inflammatory back pain to be correctly diagnosed.⁴ This could be because the first symptoms of the disorder can start early in life (before a person is 40 years old) and have a gradual onset.⁵

In response to this problem, AbbVie UK has developed the '*Don't Turn Your Back On It*' campaign in collaboration with local patient groups and back pain specialists from the UK and across Europe. Through the campaign, AbbVie UK and leading experts are looking to help reduce the time it takes for the correct diagnosis of conditions that cause inflammatory back pain.

"I am regularly surprised that people live with inflammatory back pain for years assuming it is a mechanical problem that will resolve itself, particularly those aged under 40, which is when inflammatory back pain typically starts", said Dr Raj Sengupta, Consultant Rheumatologist, R&D Director and Lead Consultant for Ankylosing Spondylitis at the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, Bath. "If you have had back pain for more than three months, I recommend you visit your doctor to determine the cause of your pain. Inflammatory back pain requires different management to other types of back pain and correct diagnosis is important to avoid long-term damage".

-ENDS-

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About *Don't Turn Your Back On It*

Don't Turn Your Back On It is a European campaign, funded and organised by AbbVie and developed in collaboration with local patient groups and back pain specialists. The campaign aims to:

- 1) Raise awareness of inflammatory back pain and the conditions that cause it
- 2) Reduce the time it takes for proper diagnosis and appropriate management, by educating people and helping them to seek professional help in identifying the cause of their back pain earlier

Living with inflammatory back pain can have a major impact on a person's life, from physical, emotional and social perspectives. *Don't Turn Your Back On It* helps people to identify the cause of their inflammatory back pain earlier.

The campaign website (www.dtyb.co.uk) provides information on types and causes of back pain, with educational resources offering insights into the lives of people living with chronic back pain.

People experiencing pain for more than 3 months are encouraged to take a short online Symptom Checker to aid discussion with their doctor and assess the likelihood of their back pain being inflammatory in nature.

About AbbVie

AbbVie is a global, research-based biopharmaceutical company formed in 2013 following separation from Abbott Laboratories. The company's mission is to use its expertise, dedicated people and unique approach to innovation to develop and market advanced therapies that address some of the world's most complex and serious diseases. AbbVie employs approximately 25,000 people worldwide and markets medicines in more than 170 countries. For further information on the company and its people, portfolio and commitments, please visit www.abbvie.co.uk.

References

¹ Airaksinen O, *et al.* European Guidelines for the management of chronic nonspecific low back pain. *Eur Spine J.* 2006; 15: S192-S300.

² Koes BW, van Tulder MW, Thomas S. Diagnosis and treatment of low back pain. *BMJ.* 2006; 332: 1430–1434.

³ Hamilton L, Macgregor A, Warmington V, *et al.* The prevalence of inflammatory back pain in a UK primary care population. *Rheumatology (Oxford)* 2014; 53: 161-4.

⁴ Rudwaleit M, Sieper J. Referral strategies for early diagnosis of axial spondyloarthritis. *Nat Rev Rheumatol.* 2012; 8: 262–268.

⁵ Sieper J, *et al.* The Assessment of Spondyloarthritis International Society (ASAS) handbook: a guide to assess spondyloarthritis. *Ann Rheum Dis.* 2009;68:ii1–ii44