



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A new retrospective study shows that Half of Canadians with Osteoporosis Have Insufficient Vitamin D Levels

Results presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research held in Toronto reveals a potential gap in clinical practice

Montréal, 18 October, 2010 – New data presented today at the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research 2010 Annual Meeting held in Toronto, Ontario, demonstrated that approximately half of Canadians with osteoporosis have insufficient levels of vitamin D (less than 80 nmol/L), despite the fact that more than 40 per cent are prescribed at least 2800 IU of vitamin D per week. Further, the study revealed that physicians did not recommend increases in vitamin D supplementation in 47 per cent of patients with known insufficient levels (Vitamin D levels less than 80 nmol/L), highlighting a potential gap in care.¹

The study, ADVANCE (**A**ssessing **D** vitamin to **enhance** osteoporosis **care**), consisted of a Canadian chart review conducted by Dr _Jonathan D_Adachi and Dr Jacques_P. Brown to better understand how vitamin D levels are assessed and managed in Canadian patients with osteoporosis. Vitamin D is essential to the treatment of osteoporosis because it promotes calcium absorption from the diet and is necessary for normal bone growth. A minimum daily supplementation of 800 IU of vitamin D is recommended for all adults with osteoporosis.²

“We know that Vitamin D plays an important role in protecting bones and needs to be part of the treatment plan for adults with osteoporosis. Unfortunately, this study indicates that we can and should be doing more to ensure that patients have adequate levels of vitamin D,”

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says Dr. Jonathan D. Adachi, Professor, Department of Medicine at St. Joseph's Hospital, McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. "The results of this study should underscore the importance of looking at vitamin D status to ensure that Canadians with osteoporosis are receiving the appropriate supplementation for comprehensive treatment of their disease."

Supplemental vitamin D helps patients with osteoporosis that may not get enough vitamin D through diet or exposure to natural sunlight to absorb calcium and build bone mass. Canadians are at increased risk of vitamin D deficiency from October through April because winter sunlight in northern latitudes does not contain enough ultraviolet B for vitamin D to be produced. Further, as one ages, the skin is less able to make vitamin D from sunlight exposure.³

About ADVANCE

This all-Canadian chart review was designed to characterize the assessment and management of vitamin D levels in patients with osteoporosis in clinical practice. Sixteen specialists and 36 primary care practitioners from Ontario and Québec participated in the review. The participating physicians completed profiles for 983 patients in their practices who were being treated to prevent fractures and who had visited their office between November 2008 and April 2009. The study was sponsored by Merck in Canada.

About Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis, a disease in which the density and strength of bone are reduced. As bones become more porous and fragile, the risk of fracture is greatly increased. The most common fractures associated with osteoporosis occur at the hip, spine and wrist and the risk of having an osteoporosis-related fracture increases with age. In Canada, one in four women and at least one in eight men over the age of 50 has osteoporosis.

About Merck

Today's Merck is working to help the world be well. Merck is a global health care leader with a diversified portfolio of prescription medicines, vaccines, consumer and animal health products. In Canada, Merck markets over 530 pharmaceutical, consumer and animal health products and is a leader in a broad range of areas such as cardiology, immunology, infectious diseases, respiratory, vaccines, women's health and sun care, and is focused on expanding offerings in other areas, including virology, oncology and diabetes.

Merck is one of the top 25 R&D investors in Canada, with an investment of \$95.4 million in 2009. Based in Montréal, Quebec, Merck employs over 1600 people across Canada. For

more information about our operations in Canada, visit www.merck.ca. *Merck Frosst Canada Ltd. and Schering-Plough Canada Inc. are integrating their operations to form a new organization called Merck.

Forward-Looking Statement

This news release includes “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of the safe harbor provisions of the United States Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such statements may include, but are not limited to, statements about the benefits of the merger between Merck and Schering-Plough, including future financial and operating results, the combined company’s plans, objectives, expectations and intentions and other statements that are not historical facts. Such statements are based upon the current beliefs and expectations of Merck’s management and are subject to significant risks and uncertainties. Actual results may differ from those set forth in the forward-looking statements.

The following factors, among others, could cause actual results to differ from those set forth in the forward-looking statements: the possibility that the expected synergies from the merger of Merck and Schering-Plough will not be realized, or will not be realized within the expected time period; the impact of pharmaceutical industry regulation and health care legislation; the risk that the businesses will not be integrated successfully; disruption from the merger making it more difficult to maintain business and operational relationships; Merck’s ability to accurately predict future market conditions; dependence on the effectiveness of Merck’s patents and other protections for innovative products; the risk of new and changing regulation and health policies in the United States and internationally and the exposure to litigation and/or regulatory actions.

Merck undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. Additional factors that could cause results to differ materially from those described in the forward-looking statements can be found in Merck’s 2009 Annual Report on Form 10-K and the company’s other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) available at the SEC’s Internet site (www.sec.gov).

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¹ Adachi, J. and Brown, J. Chart Review Initiative to Characterize the Assessment and Management of Vitamin D Levels in Patients with Osteoporosis in Clinical Practice. Presented at American Society for Bone and Mineral Research. October, 2010.

² Osteoporosis Canada. Vitamin D: A key factor in good calcium absorption. http://www.osteoporosis.ca/index.php/ci_id/5536/la_id/1.htm Accessed October 12, 2010.

³ Osteoporosis Canada. New vitamin D guidelines - Physicians say Canadians should be taking more supplements. http://www.osteoporosis.ca/index.php/ci_id/9892/la_id/1.htm Accessed October 12, 2010.