

EMBARGOED UNTIL FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 7.00 AM CET

Daughters value their mothers' quality of life but ignore the impact of osteoporosis, one of the main health threats for many older women

- ▶ **New *Timeless Moments* survey reveals only 7% of mothers and daughters discuss osteoporosis, a disease affecting 200 million people worldwide¹**
- ▶ **Findings support the goals of *Timeless Women* campaign, launched in 2008 to raise awareness of osteoporosis and its consequences**
- ▶ ***Timeless Moments* online initiative uses social media to help engage younger women in the fight against osteoporosis**

Berlin, October 16, 2009 – New research shows that the loss of their mother's independence is the greatest fear for many daughters – yet most of them fail to discuss the impact of osteoporosis, the bone-weakening disease that is a major cause of disability and loss of independence among older women.

The *Timeless Moments* survey, involving more than 1,400 daughters in five countries, found that only 7% of daughters talk about osteoporosis with their mothers, and most are more worried about their mother suffering from other common conditions such as heart disease, breast cancer or Alzheimer's disease².

"Osteoporosis affects more than 200 million people worldwide, and one out of three women over the age of 50 will suffer a fracture as a result⁴," said Judy Stenmark, Chief Operating Officer of the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF), a not-for-profit, non-governmental, global organisation and one of the partners of the *Timeless Women* Campaign. "The findings of this survey support one of our key aims, to educate women of all ages about osteoporosis and encourage broader discussion about ways to prevent and treat this condition."

Results of the survey, released today to mark World Osteoporosis Day, show that daughters generally underestimate the seriousness of osteoporosis and fail to see it as an urgent health priority, despite the devastating impact it can have on women's lives.

The survey confirmed that for 90% of daughters, health was the topic they discussed most frequently with their mothers. Daughters said their most common concerns as their mothers grew older were loss of independence (43%), reduced quality of life (40%), and becoming unable to lead an active life (40%)².

However, only a small minority of mothers and daughters discuss osteoporosis (7%), even though bone fractures and their potentially life-threatening consequences are the major cause of disability and loss of independence in osteoporosis patients. Even if they were aware of the potential impact of osteoporosis, less than half of daughters (42%) said they would ensure that their mother discussed this with their doctor immediately².

Encouraging more open dialogue about osteoporosis is one of the goals of the *Timeless Women* campaign, launched on World Osteoporosis Day in 2008 with support from ambassador and iconic James Bond actress Ursula Andress. The campaign shatters the traditional image of women with osteoporosis as 'frail and fragile' and encourages women to educate themselves about osteoporosis and the need to treat it, ultimately empowering themselves to enjoy an active and independent lifestyle³.

"Osteoporosis is known as the 'silent epidemic' because there are no visible symptoms⁵, but it seems that 'silent' could also refer to the lack of conversation about osteoporosis," said Shelley Ross, Secretary General of the Medical Women's International Association which also supported the survey. "Daughters can play a key role in ensuring their mothers are diagnosed and treated, especially since last year's research found that seven out of 10 women sometimes missed a treatment dose³. However, complete adherence to osteoporosis treatment is necessary for maximum fracture protection⁶."

Fortunately, an opportunity for constructive dialogue was identified in this year's *Timeless Moments* survey. Almost one-third (28%) would ask their mother to include osteoporosis in that health check, if they were aware of the true impact of the disease and how it could reduce their mother's quality of life and independence².

In order to continue fostering discussion about osteoporosis between daughters and their mothers, this year the *Timeless Women* campaign is launching a new initiative called *Timeless Moments* through its website. It encourages mothers and daughters to treasure the special moments they enjoy together and to share them with other *Timeless Women* via the website. Anyone can upload a photo or description of their most precious mother-daughter times. For more information, visit www.fortimelesswomen.com.

Both *Timeless Women* surveys have shown how important quality of life and independence are to women with osteoporosis. For those who do not want their osteoporosis to compromise these active lifestyles, a range of treatment options are now available which should be discussed with their doctor in order to find a suitable treatment.

About the survey

The survey was conducted in August 2009 by the independent market research company Double Helix in Canada, China, France, Germany and Switzerland¹. More than 100 daughters aged between 25 and 45 were surveyed in each country, with the exception of China where there were more than 1,000 respondents. The total survey population was 1,444 and, in order to ensure that all countries had equal representation in the global data reported, the data were weighted to prevent an over-representation in the global set. Respondents were recruited from an internet panel representing the general population¹. The campaign was supported by a grant from Novartis Pharma AG.

About the *Timeless Women* Campaign

Timeless Women: The Campaign for Stronger Bones was launched in October 2008 in Brussels to raise awareness of osteoporosis. Experts and organizations joined forces with women with osteoporosis to share their insights and experience of this 'silent epidemic'. *Timeless Women: The Campaign for Stronger Bones* was initially set up by a partnership of the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF), the Medical Women's International

Association (MWIA) with a grant from Novartis Pharma AG. The aim of this campaign is to educate women about osteoporosis and empower them to live life to the fullest.

About IOF

The IOF is a not-for-profit foundation based in Switzerland which functions as a global alliance of patients, medical and research societies, scientists, health care professionals, and international companies concerned about bone health. It is the largest global nongovernmental organization (NGO) dedicated to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis. The IOF aims to increase awareness and understanding of osteoporosis; motivate people to take action to prevent, diagnose and treat osteoporosis; and support national osteoporosis societies in order to maximize their effectiveness.

About MWIA

The MWIA is an international NGO representing women doctors from all five continents. The goals of the MWIA include: to promote the cooperation of Medical Women in different countries and to develop friendship and understanding between Medical Women throughout the world; to actively work against gender related inequalities in the medical profession between female and male doctors including career opportunities and economical aspects; to actively work to overcome gender-related differences in health and healthcare between men and women, girls and boys throughout the world; and to offer medical women the opportunity to meet so as to confer upon questions concerning the health and well-being of humanity.

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