

Press release

2014 “Pearl Action” Psoriasis Disease Awareness Campaign Launches in Beijing

KOLs Call for Standardized Treatment to Improve Psoriasis Patients’ Quality of Life

Beijing, China, October 26, 2014- The Chinese Medical Association’s (CMA) Society of Dermatology and Xian Janssen Pharmaceutical Ltd. jointly launched a disease awareness campaign “Pearl Action—Treat Psoriasis Properly and Help Reshape a Wonderful Life” ahead of World Psoriasis Day.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of psoriasis, examine the impact on patients living with the disease, underscore the importance of standardized treatment, and help improve the overall quality of lives of patients suffering from psoriasis.

The campaign includes the launch of a disease awareness webpage, a quality of life survey toward people suffering from psoriasis, and disease education activities in 20 cities in China. It will also release a video series of interviews with leading dermatologists and patients’ live stories.

Psoriasis, a common skin disease widely known as “oxhide lichen” in China, is a chronic inflammatory dermatitis causing red, scaly plaques, and itching.

“Statistics shows that approximately 6.5 million people suffer from psoriasis in China with an incidence rate of 0.47%, which is 3 times compared to the rate in 1984. This fact indicates in the past 30 years, the number of Chinese patients suffering from the disease has risen significantly,” said Prof. Zhang Jianzhong, President of the CMA’s Society of Dermatology and Director of the Department of Dermatology of Peking University People’s Hospital.

Meanwhile, more in-depth studies and public attention are needed to access and care for the quality of life of people living with psoriasis.

Prof. Zheng Min, Director of the Department of Dermatology of the Second Affiliated Hospital, Zhejiang University Medical College, said: “Results of a quality of life survey examining 253 patients show that 80% of patients’ lives were affected by the disease to significant degree, while over half of those surveyed believe the disease has severely affected their lives.”

The negative impact not only comes from disease itself, but also from public misunderstanding, discrimination, and delay in seeking proper treatment due to misconceptions from fraudulent prescription advertisements widely seen on the streets. To address these issues, leading experts in China are calling for an end to the stigma associated with psoriasis, a call that will help patients “reshape their wonderful life”.

Psoriasis Not Contagious

Many people think that psoriasis is contagious, but this is a total misconception. The public should not be concerned when having physical contacts with these patients.

“Genetics is the main cause of psoriasis, but there’s no guarantee that the disease will be passed on to patients’ children,” said Prof. ZhengJie, Director of the Department of Dermatology of Ruijin Hospital, Shanghai Jiaotong University School of Medicine. “The other major cause is from the environment, primarily due to infections and stress. ‘Infection’ refers to, for example, upper respiratory tract infection or dysbacteriosis on the skin. Stress mainly includes anxiety and sleep deprivation.”

The pathogenesis of psoriasis is complicated. It is believed that interleukin-17 and TNF- α are responsible for overproduction of keratinocytes, hemangiectasis and leakage of blood components, which in turn lead to red and scaly plaques.

Patients with Heavy Burden

Definitive clinical data shows that psoriasis is a chronic disease causing severe negative impact on patients. Psoriasis can affect patients in three ways: physically, mentally and economically.

“People with psoriasis unfortunately carry an unpleasant appearance. Meanwhile, they suffer from systemic diseases such as joint involvement and metabolism disorder within their organs. Most patients struggle with anxiety and depression, all having negative impacts on their work and life,” said Prof. Jin Hongzhong, Director of the Department of Dermatology of Peking Union Medical College Hospital.

In addition, the situation is exacerbated by misperception and prejudice from public. It is crucial to put an end on the stigma associated with psoriasis and treat these patients equally, because this will do wonders to improve their lives.

Standardized Treatment Critical to Control the Disease

While patients are looking for a cure, unfortunately, so far there is no cure for the disease. However, it can certainly be mitigated and controlled by standardized treatment and a positive attitude, which can improve the quality of life of patients.

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Prof. Wang Gang, Director of the Department of Dermatology of Xijing Hospital, the Fourth Military Medical University, stressed: "Patients should receive standardized treatment in trusted hospitals, meaning treating the disease with the most advanced and proven treatment plan possible according to specifications. In addition, patients with psoriasis need a more personalized treatment. We should come up with different therapy plans based on the disease's type and level of severity."

Biologics Applied Internationally to Treat Psoriasis

There are various treatment methods for psoriasis, including external remedy, physical therapy, oral administration and biologics.

"Biologics is an important achievement in the treatment of psoriasis in recent years, and is now widely used around the world. Compared to traditional therapies, this advanced therapy has obvious advantages in terms of time of onset, efficacy, safety and treatment time. For example, biological injection of a 2 to 3 month-interval can help patients improve compliance and eliminate the inconvenience of frequent doctor visits," Prof. Gu Jun, Director of the Department of Dermatology of Changhai Hospital, of the Second Military Medical University Shanghai, said.

Zheng Lei, Vice President of Xian Janssen Pharmaceutical Ltd., said: "Xian Janssen has been caring for patients with psoriasis. Besides providing patients with advanced medicines, developing new products to meet their needs, and helping them relieve pain caused by the disease, we are committed to helping the world understand them via various disease awareness and public education programs in order to make a positive impact on the lives of patients with psoriasis."

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