

## Press Release

### **World Stroke Day 2016: Research reveals delayed diagnosis leaves atrial fibrillation patients at major stroke risk**

- Atrial fibrillation (AF) increases the risk of a severe stroke [1] however almost half of patients are unaware of the risk [2]
- The AFfect survey revealed that one in two patients had not heard of the condition at time of diagnosis [2]
- World Stroke Day is on Saturday 29th October, find out more at [www.worldstrokecampaign.org](http://www.worldstrokecampaign.org)

**Munich, Germany (October 27, 2016)** – New research conducted among people with AF in Europe has found that one in four experienced symptoms for one year or longer before they were diagnosed with the condition.<sup>2</sup> In AF, the heart beats in an abnormal rhythm and it is the most common type of heart rhythm disorder,<sup>3</sup> yet around one in two had not heard of AF at time of diagnosis.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, while people with AF are five times more likely to have a stroke,<sup>1</sup> the AFfect survey revealed that almost half of those diagnosed with the condition were unaware of the increased risk of stroke;<sup>2</sup> highlighting the need for better information for patients. The research was commissioned by Daiichi Sankyo Europe GmbH and is being published to mark World Stroke Day 2016 on the 29th October.

AF has a major impact on the lives of those with the condition, with over two-thirds of respondents saying it had a negative impact on their physical and emotional wellbeing.<sup>2</sup> This was especially likely to affect those taking the commonly prescribed vitamin K antagonist (VKA) treatment warfarin, with 62% of these patients saying their physical wellbeing was negatively affected.<sup>2</sup>

Findings from the AFfect survey revealed that half of respondents had switched treatment, and around a third reported treatment efficacy and side effects as the reasons for switching.<sup>2</sup> Nearly half of patients taking twice daily treatment said they would prefer to take fewer pills.<sup>2</sup> Worryingly, 10% of respondents with AF were not currently taking treatment for their condition, putting them at increased risk of stroke.<sup>2</sup>

“AF is a genuine public health priority in Europe, and the problem is growing. We need to do more to give people a fast diagnosis, and help them to understand that they are at increased risk of a severe, potentially fatal, stroke,” said Trudie C. Lobban MBE, Founder & CEO of Atrial Fibrillation Association (AFA). “If people feel that their heart is beating in an unusual way they should seek urgent medical advice. There are a range of available treatments which can reduce the risk of stroke in people with AF, and it is vital that people get the support they need to protect themselves.”

Following recent treatment developments, the ESC Management of AF Guidelines recommend non-VKA oral anticoagulants, or NOACs (including edoxaban, apixaban, dabigatran, and rivaroxaban) in preference to Vitamin K antagonists to prevent stroke in AF patients (class 1A recommendation, based on the level of evidence), noting that the underuse of oral anticoagulants in AF patients remains an ongoing issue.<sup>3</sup>

Reporting on AF treatment, 62% of respondents said they were not presented with any treatment options at diagnosis, while 40% of respondents noted that they would like more information on AF treatments, and 32% said they want more information on stroke prevention.<sup>2</sup>

Over six million Europeans suffer from AF and this figure is expected to at least double over the next 50 years.<sup>1</sup> As well as carrying an increased risk of stroke, AF also raises stroke severity.<sup>1</sup>

The theme of this year's World Stroke Day is Face the Facts: Stroke is Treatable, highlighting that a real difference can be made through better awareness, access, and action. Every six seconds someone somewhere will die of stroke.<sup>4</sup> To find out more visit [www.worldstrokecampaign.org](http://www.worldstrokecampaign.org).

- ENDS -

### **About Atrial Fibrillation**

AF is a condition where the heart beats irregularly and rapidly. When this happens, blood can pool and thicken in the chambers of the heart causing an increased risk of blood clots. These blood clots can break off and travel through the blood stream to the brain (or sometimes to another part of the body), where they have the potential to cause a stroke.<sup>4</sup>

AF is the most common type of heart rhythm disorder, and is associated with substantial morbidity and mortality.<sup>5</sup> Over six million Europeans suffer from AF and this figure is expected to at least double over the next 50 years.<sup>1</sup> Compared to those without AF, people with the arrhythmia have a three to five times higher risk of stroke.<sup>6</sup> One in five of all strokes are a result of AF.<sup>1</sup>

### **About the AFfect survey**

The independent market research company Opinion Health conducted an online survey in 1,000 people living with AF. Participants were spread equally across France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK. Participants were 18 years of age and older. Fieldwork for the study was undertaken between the 17th April and 11th May 2016. The research was conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct. More information can be found at: <http://opinionhealth.com/>.

### **About World Stroke Day**

This year World Stroke Day is on Saturday 29th October. World Stroke Day is an initiative of the World Stroke Organization to raise awareness of the incidence of stroke world-wide and the fact that Stroke is treatable. Find out more at [www.worldstrokecampaign.org](http://www.worldstrokecampaign.org).

### **About Daiichi Sankyo**

Daiichi Sankyo Group is dedicated to the creation and supply of innovative pharmaceutical products to address diversified, unmet medical needs of patients in both mature and emerging markets. With over 100 years of scientific expertise and a presence in more than 20 countries, Daiichi Sankyo and its 16,000 employees around the world draw upon a rich legacy of innovation and a robust pipeline of promising new medicines to help people. In addition to a strong portfolio of medicines for hypertension and thrombotic disorders, under the Group's 2025 Vision to become a "Global Pharma Innovator with Competitive Advantage in Oncology," Daiichi Sankyo research and development is primarily focused on bringing forth novel therapies in oncology, including immuno-oncology, with additional focus on new horizon areas, such as pain management, neurodegenerative diseases, heart and kidney diseases, and other rare diseases. For

Passion for Innovation.  
Compassion for Patients.™



more information, please visit: [www.daiichisankyo.com](http://www.daiichisankyo.com).

**Contact**

Lydia Worms (Europe)  
Daiichi Sankyo Europe GmbH  
Edoxaban Communications & Product PR Europe  
+49 (89) 7808751

**Forward-looking statements**

This press release contains forward-looking statements and information about future developments in the sector, and the legal and business conditions of DAIICHI SANKYO Co., Ltd. Such forward-looking statements are uncertain and are subject at all times to the risks of change, particularly to the usual risks faced by a global pharmaceutical company, including the impact of the prices for products and raw materials, medication safety, changes in exchange rates, government regulations, employee relations, taxes, political instability and terrorism as well as the results of independent demands and governmental inquiries that affect the affairs of the company. All forward-looking statements contained in this release hold true as of the date of publication. They do not represent any guarantee of future performance. Actual events and developments could differ materially from the forward-looking statements that are explicitly expressed or implied in these statements. DAIICHI SANKYO Co., Ltd. assume no responsibility for the updating of such forward-looking statements about future developments of the sector, legal and business conditions and the company.