

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **For Men with Prostate Cancer, Sex Still Matters**

*Canadians underestimate difficulty of coping with prostate cancer's impact on sex life*

**TORONTO Nov 29, 2012:** Two recent Leger Marketing surveys probing Canadians' perceptions of the most difficult things to deal with if faced with a diagnosis of prostate cancer illustrate a significant gap in appreciating quality of life issues associated with the disease.

For instance, according to the surveys, while Canadians in general (32%) and men who have had, or currently have, prostate cancer (37%) both rated worrying or losing hope as the hardest single thing to deal with, the two groups had a significantly different understanding of the importance of the impact of prostate cancer on a man's sex life.

The surveys also suggest men who have or had prostate cancer rated their sex life as the second most difficult thing to deal with when facing a diagnosis of prostate cancer (23%) whereas Canadian men ranked sex life as sixth overall (4%). Of those affected by prostate cancer, men from Atlantic Canada (32%) and Ontario (28%) are more likely to worry about their sex lives after their prostate cancer diagnosis compared to those in Quebec (15%).

"Prostate cancer can affect men on a number of levels," says Dr. Jean-Baptiste Lattouf, MD, FRCS (C) uro-oncologist, laparoscopist, assistant professor at the Surgery Department of the Hospital Center of the University of Montreal (CHUM). "The disease can most definitely impact a man's sexual relationship with his partner, but I also think the issue of hope is an important one. It challenges us to better understand how we can help men, whether it's through better information, new or improved treatments, or stronger support, during their cancer journey."

Jackie Manthorne, president and CEO of the Canadian Cancer Survivors Network (CCSN), concurs. "This survey highlights a number of important points," says Manthorne. "We know that sexual intimacy is an ongoing challenge for many prostate cancer patients, and indeed, cancer patients in general. Healthcare professionals need to ensure they take time to encourage patients to express their concerns. Quality of life issues are very real for prostate cancer patients and survivors and they need to be better understood and managed."

The results indicate feeling embarrassed, knowing their illness has an impact on loved ones, and being unable to access new and better treatments round out prostate cancer sufferers' top five ranking of their most difficult issues.

### *Talking about prostate cancer*

According to the survey, most men are comfortable discussing with others the fact they have or have had prostate cancer and are not embarrassed to tell people about it. In addition, 83% of respondents agreed that people around them are sympathetic about their condition.

But for the Canadians who have had to deal with a diagnosis of prostate cancer, the survey reports as many as 30% feel that the people around them do not think that prostate cancer is important.

Additionally, 44% of respondents agree that their family and friends don't understand how serious a disease prostate cancer is.

"We need to continue educating people about the seriousness of the disease," says Manthorne. "It is true that many people live long and fulfilling lives with prostate cancer, but others aren't so lucky. Prostate cancer is still cancer. It needs to be taken seriously."

Regional findings from this survey:

- 87% of men are comfortable discussing with others that they have or have had prostate cancer; the same proportion says they are *not* embarrassed to tell people about it.
  - Men who are married are *less* likely to be comfortable discussing that they have/had prostate cancer with others compared to men who are single, widowed, divorced or separated (85% vs. 93%).
  - Regionally, men from Atlantic Canada are the most likely to feel comfortable discussing this with others (98% vs. 86% rest of Canada).
  - Men from Quebec are the *most* likely to feel embarrassed about their diagnosis (40% vs. 15% rest of Canada).
- 83% of men who have or have had prostate cancer *agree* that people around them are sympathetic about their condition.
  - Regionally, men from B.C. (92%) are more likely to agree that people around them are sympathetic towards their condition compared to men from Quebec (81%) and Atlantic Canada (77%).

"We continue to make strides in our understanding of the disease from both a medical and social perspective," says Dr. Lattouf. "Ongoing dialogue will only help our progress to better understand what men need to successfully address their challenges during and after their treatment."

### **About the Research**

The survey, commissioned by Astellas Pharma Canada, Inc., was completed online by Leger Marketing from October 3, 2012 to October 9, 2012 with a sample of 603 Canadian men who currently have or have had prostate cancer. A previous survey completed online from July 30, 2012 to August 1, 2012, with a sample of 1500 Canadians, was used for comparison.

A probability sample for men who have/had prostate cancer of the same size would yield a margin of error of  $\pm 2.5\%$ , 19 times out of 20. A probability sample for Canadians in general of the same size would yield a margin of error of  $\pm 4.0\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

### **About the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network (CCSN)**

The Canadian Cancer Survivor Network was created by a group of Canadians concerned about cancer. CCSN's mission is to empower collaborative action by cancer patients, families and communities to identify and work to remove barriers to optimal patient care, and to ensure that cancer survivors have access to education and action opportunities to have their voices heard in planning and implementing an optimal health care system. CCSN is committed to educate the public and policy makers about the financial, emotional and health costs of cancer and offer considered, positive ideas and recommendations to alleviate their effects. To learn more, visit [www.survivornet.ca](http://www.survivornet.ca).

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