

Canada Adds its Voice to International Call for Better Understanding of Psoriasis

October 29, 2014, Ottawa – The Canadian Dermatology Association has proclaimed today, October 29, World Psoriasis Day in Canada. With this statement, Canada joins organizations around the globe, including the World Health Organization, which issued a rare statement about psoriasis earlier this year, in acknowledging the prevalence, complexity and suffering associated with this disease.

Over 125 million people worldwide suffer with psoriasis. It affects one million Canadians, close to three percent of the population. Psoriasis does not discriminate, attacking people of both sexes and all ages including infants. Up to 30 percent of patients with psoriasis have or will have arthritis.

According to the World Health Organization, "It is a chronic, non-communicable, painful, disfiguring and disabling disease for which there is no cure. ... Those with psoriasis are at an elevated risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, Crohn's disease, heart attack, ulcerative colitis, metabolic syndrome, stroke and liver disease." In May 2014, the World Health Organization statement emphasized the importance of raising awareness about the disease, encouraging member states (including Canada) to advocate against the stigma experienced by so many who suffer from psoriasis.

According to Dr. David Zloty, president of the Canadian Dermatology Association, "Psoriasis is more than a common skin condition; it is a disease of the immune system. The World Health Organization statement is an important milestone internationally. In Canada, we issued our own proclamation for World Psoriasis Day in the hopes that we can draw attention and ensure access to treatment for the sake of our patients." He continued, "We are fortunate to have some of the best researchers on the topic here in Canada – research being an important piece for resolving psoriasis in the future."

The CDA's past-president, Dr. Richard Langley, led ground-breaking research published this summer in the *New England Journal of Medicine* which set new ways of thinking about the cause of psoriasis. His international team successfully tested a novel treatment as a result.

Patients with moderate to severe psoriasis live with itchy, flaky, painful, bleeding skin; they contend with other illnesses like arthritis as well as the often significant social and emotional repercussions of the visible symptoms. It is particularly difficult on the young.

"People living with psoriasis often hide their skin and some do even isolate themselves, feeling shame and embarrassment because of their condition," confirms Christine Janus, Executive Director of the Canadian Skin Patient Alliance, which advocates on behalf of psoriasis patients in Canada. "The impact that psoriasis can have on their lives and the lives of their family members can sometimes be devastating."

World Psoriasis Day is an initiative of the International Federation of Psoriasis Associations and was first celebrated in 2004. It was conceived for patients by patients as a special day for people living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis – giving them an international voice so their condition can be taken more seriously.

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About the CDA

The Canadian Dermatology Association, founded in 1925, represents Canadian dermatologists. The association provides easy access to the largest, most reliable source of medical knowledge on dermatology. CDA exists to advance the science and art of medicine and surgery related to the care of the skin, hair and nails; provide continuing professional development for its members; support and advance patient care; provide public education on sun protection and other aspects of skin health; and promote a lifetime of healthier skin, hair and nails. By doing so, CDA informs and empowers both medical professionals and the Canadian public.

To learn more about what the work CDA does visit www.dermatology.ca or join the conversation on www.Twitter.com/CdnDermatology or www.Facebook.com/CdnDermatology.

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