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Novartis AG

First Major Survey of Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Nurses Highlights Significant Disparities in MS Nursing Across Europe

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Brussels, May 26, 2010 (ots/PRNewswire) - The first major survey of European Multiple Sclerosis (MS) nurses revealed that nearly one in three nurses (31%) reported that standards of MS care are not adequately maintained in their country. The results of this survey will be presented for the first time on Friday 28 May, via a live webcast at the European MS Platform (EMSP) Annual Congress in Stuttgart, Germany.

The MS-NEED: European Survey polled 280 MS nurses in the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Italy, Poland and the UK, and found considerable variations in the availability of specialised training and education for MS nurses across Europe that could potentially impact equality of care for people with MS across Europe. Overall, one in five nurses reported that they have not received adequate training and education to support them in their day-to-day role.

Amy Perrin Ross, President of the International Organization of Multiple Sclerosis Nurses (IOMSN) said, "The findings from MS-NEED: European Survey show how far MS nurses have come in expanding their role but also identify further areas for development. A benchmark and standard for training and certification of MS nurses across Europe is needed to ensure equality of health service provision and to improve the quality of life of MS patients and their families."

The survey, conducted by the EMSP in cooperation with the IOMSN and Rehabilitation in MS (RIMS), the European network of MS centres, also highlighted variations in clinical practice, access to support services such as rehabilitation, and participation in research.

"MS nurses provide critical information, support and advice to MS patients and their families throughout the course of this chronic, disabling disease. By providing this specialised, expert service they can make an important impact on the overall quality of life of patients. It is therefore important to recognise MS nursing as a speciality within Europe and to find a way to unify, define and benchmark care provision to avoid geographical inequalities in patient care" said Professor Hans-Peter Hartung (Professor and Chairman, Dept. of Neurology Heinrich-Heine University, Germany).

Hear the results of MS-NEED: European Survey for the first time and the EMSP, IOMSN and RIMS recommendations for action on a European and national level by logging onto the MS-NEED: European Survey live, interactive webcast on Friday, 28 May, at 12:30 CET using the information below:

Please click on the website link: <http://www.emsp.org/ms-need/>

The webcast provides you with a unique opportunity to learn about the data and ask questions, in real-time, from leading global nurse thought leaders.

What is MS?

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a complex, chronic, disabling disease. It affects twice as many women as men, and is usually first diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 40, at a critical stage in adult life with often considerable family and work responsibilities. To date, no cure exists. It is estimated that there are more than 500,000 people with MS in Europe.

European MS Platform (EMSP) represents their interests at the European level, working with the European bodies on behalf of its 33 national member organisations to achieve its goals of high quality & equitable treatment and support for all citizens suffering from MS.

The MS-NEED: European Survey was conducted by Adelphi International Research and was supported by an unrestricted educational grant from Novartis Pharma AG.

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