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Preliminary Data from Landmark Survey Uncovers Trends in Quality of Life and Occupational Consequences of Allergy Symptoms

New York, NY, February 27, 2006 – Initial data from the largest survey of its kind suggest an overwhelming trend linking allergy (allergic rhinitis) symptoms to serious quality of life and occupational consequences that are largely ignored in the management of allergy patients – most of whom have symptoms year round. The report has been endorsed by the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology.

“Allergies in America: A Landmark Survey of Nasal Allergy Sufferers” reveals that, at their peak, symptoms leave allergy patients feeling *tired* (80%), *miserable* (65%), and *irritable* (62%); and most patients (52%) say symptoms hurt them on the job: *decreasing their job performance, interfering with work, and causing them to miss work*. Nasal allergies are a *year-around* problem for 56% of patients.

The survey – encompassing more than 2,500 nasal-allergy patients and 400 healthcare providers -- also uncovered a suboptimal lack of communication between doctors and patients.

“Nasal allergies are a serious problem in the United States. The results are eye-opening and should encourage doctors and patients to change the way they think about and treat allergies,” according to Michael Blaiss, M.D., Past-President of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology.

“This data reveals the need for further investigation into the behavioral, psychosocial and economic impact of allergy symptoms on public health,” said Jeremy J. Nobel, M.D., M.P.H.

According to allergists, 59% of their patients have missed work due to their allergy symptoms and allergists believe that their patients work productivity is at 60% when symptoms are at their worst.

In the United States, the economic burden of allergy is estimated at \$18 billion.¹

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¹ <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/factsheets/allergystat.htm>

Other survey highlights include:

- Only 41% of patients who have seen a doctor follow their healthcare providers' instructions on the management and treatment of nasal allergies *all of the time*, while 45% say they follow advice *most of the time*;
- 70% of Allergists, 67% of ENTs, 57% of Primary Care Physicians, and 39% of Nurse Practitioners/Physician Assistants *believe their patients follow their advice all or most of the time*;
- 100% of allergists, 94% of ENTs, 92% of Nurse Practitioners/Physician Assistants, and 88% of Primary Care Physicians believe that medical treatment does affect patient's quality of life;
- Healthcare providers overestimate the percentage of patients very satisfied with their management nasal allergies;
- An overwhelming majority of patients (89%) and healthcare providers (100-95%) agree there is a need for better education of people with nasal allergies about their conditions and treatments.

"The disparity between patients and physicians in perception of successful disease management is just one of the troubling signals that lack of communication that could be dangerous – especially when it comes to addressing how allergies affect patients' everyday lives," according to Dr. Blaiss.

The independent poll was commissioned by Altana Pharma Group and conducted by Schulman, Ronca and Bucuvala, Inc.

About the Survey

Schulman, Ronca and Bucuvalas, Inc. fielded the patient and physician survey on behalf of Altana Pharma Group between January 4th and February 14th, 2006 among a nationwide sample of 2,500 adults, 18 years of age or older, of whom all have been diagnosed with nasal allergies (34,000 households were screened to achieve this sampling) and 400 physicians and other health care providers. The data for the patient survey was weighted to be representative of the total U.S. adult population on the basis of region, age within gender, education, household income and race/ethnicity. The maximum expected sampling error for a simple random sample of 2,500 (e.g., the patient survey) would be ± 1.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The maximum expected sampling error for a simple random sample of 100 (e.g., primary care doctors) would be ± 9.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Key investigators of the survey include: Dr. Michael Blaiss, Dr. Jennifer Derebery, Dr. James Hadley, Dr. Eli Meltzer, Dr. Robert Naclerio, Dr. Harold Nelson, Dr. Stuart Stoloff.

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About the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology

The ACAAI is a professional medical organization comprising nearly 5,000 qualified allergists-immunologists and related health care professionals. The College is dedicated to the clinical practice of allergy, asthma and immunology through education and research to promote the highest quality of patient care.

About Schulman, Ronca and Buculvalas, Inc.

SRBI (srbi.com) is a full-service global strategy and research organization with a specialty in public policy and opinion surveys. Clients include Fortune 500 companies, federal, state and local governments, foundations and universities. SRBI has an established track record of providing high quality research and analysis. In addition to its headquarters in New York City, SRBI has offices in Washington DC., Florida, New Jersey and Tennessee. SRBI is a member of the National Council on Published Polls (NCCP) and the Council of American Research Organizations (CASRO).

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