

PRESS RELEASE

UK Teenagers Lack Access to Health Education and NHS Awareness, says Sustainable Healthcare Poll

- *Nearly one in three (29 per cent) of young people don't think their education at school or college has helped them manage their health¹ and 68 per cent (Strongly agree or agree) said they would have liked to learn more about how to manage their health in school¹*
- *More than double would go to GPs first for advice on physical health than their own parents¹, but a third report their GP often doesn't explain things in a way they understand¹*
- *Nearly 1 in 5 young people report having had no teaching at school on mental health¹ – despite suicide being among the greatest causes of mortality in this age group²*

Maidenhead, UK, Embargoed until 0:01hrs GMT, November 29th, 2016 - Young people feel under informed in key areas of healthcare and do not identify some key healthcare professionals as trusted sources of advice, according to new data to be presented today at a London healthcare conference hosted by biopharmaceutical company AbbVie. Experts at the *Going Beyond Medicine* conference will argue the importance of health and education systems having better links in order to promote better lifelong confidence in seeking help and self-managing medical conditions.

The survey of 1002 healthy 15-18 year olds (undertaken by Censuswide) asked a range of questions about confidence and trust in sources of healthcare advice. Among the key findings were:

- More than double the number of respondents reported having had no teaching on mental health conditions compared to physical, sexual or fitness health advice; and more than 1 in 12 report they would not seek advice on mental health problems¹
- Nearly half (45.7 per cent) reported ignoring healthcare symptoms to avoid seeing a healthcare professional in the past year¹
- Less than one percent of young people selected a pharmacist as a top source of advice on physical, mental or sexual health; less than the number who identified internet search engines¹. This comes despite the key role policy makers hope pharmacy can play in sharing load with GPs¹
- While GPs come out as preferred source of healthcare advice across the board, many young people look outside of healthcare professionals for sexual health advice. 16 per cent would look to the internet and 1 in 10 would ask advice from a friend¹

- Respondents were less likely to talk to a healthcare professional about mental health compared to physical health. And also more likely to talk to their friends about mental health versus physical.
- Overall boys report higher levels of confidence in their own health than girls, less trust in healthcare professionals and greater likelihood to trust the internet and friends

Matt Regan, UK General Manager of AbbVie said: “One of the themes we are interested in examining at AbbVie is how the level of confidence people have in their own healthcare can promote good choices and enable them take control when they experience illness. ‘Patient activation’ is something the NHS wants to promote as it is associated with better health outcomes and reduced costs of healthcare. Younger people are often overlooked in this discussion as they have the greatest overall good health in society but this polling indicates we may be storing up problems.”

Carrie Grant broadcaster, presenter and patient said: “The sad truth is that, although we think of this age group as being free of needing to care about their health, an increasingly large proportion will be diagnosed with a chronic health condition while a teenager. They will then need to navigate the healthcare system to manage and ultimately hold personal responsibility for the rest of their lives. These young people are going to need self-confidence and resilience to be able to master that and this poll indicates how much more we still need to do to equip them with the skills they need.”

Emma Rigby, Chief Executive of the Association for Young People’s Health said: “This work highlights the importance of improving young people’s experience of primary care and supporting GPs to work effectively with young people. It also highlights the key role that health education in schools and colleges should play in supporting young people’s health. Giving young people better information about how they can seek help in a safe and youth friendly way is essential to support young people’s physical and emotional health and wellbeing.”

About this poll

The research was conducted by Censuswide via an online panel, with 1,002 healthy respondents aged 15-18 in the UK between 16– 22. August 2016. The survey was conducted from a random sample of UK respondents who do not have an existing long term condition or an existing recurring health complaint that requires them to seek medical advice more than twice a year. Censuswide abide by and employ members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles.

About AbbVie

AbbVie is a global, research-based biopharmaceutical company formed in 2013 following separation from Abbott Laboratories. The company's mission is to use its expertise, dedicated people and unique approach to innovation to develop and market advanced therapies that address some of the world's most complex and serious diseases. Together with its wholly-owned subsidiary, Pharmacyclics, AbbVie employs more than 28,000 people worldwide and markets medicines in more than 170 countries. For further information on the company and its people, portfolio and commitments, please visit www.abbvie.co.uk.

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Media:

Matthew Worrall

matthew.worrall@abbvie.com

+44 (0)7464 652 626

+44 (0)1628 561 090

¹ – Statistics drawn from the Censuswide poll described above. All data held onfile by AbbVie and available upon request

² – Office of National Statistics visualisation of mortality data: <http://visual.ons.gov.uk/what-are-the-top-causes-of-death-by-age-and-gender/> [Data access November 2016]