PRESS RELEASE

AbbVie launches first ever series of mindfulness podcasts to support people living with blood cancers

- In collaboration with AbbVie, mindfulness expert Dr Caroline Hoffman has developed a series of new podcast audio recordings specifically tailored to help support people living with blood cancers, and their partners or carers
- The mindfulness podcasts have been created with support from the UK’s leading blood cancer charities including Leukaemia CARE, the Lymphoma Association, CLL Support Association and Bloodwise
- With a growing body of evidence demonstrating the negative psychological impact of blood cancers on patients, the mindfulness podcasts aim to help alleviate emotional stress and improve overall well-being

For immediate release
Maidenhead, UK, Thursday 11 May 2017 – To mark Mental Health Awareness Week, AbbVie has today launched the first ever series of mindfulness podcasts specifically tailored for people affected by blood cancers. The podcast resources have been developed by mindfulness expert Dr Caroline Hoffman with input from a number of leading UK cancer charities including the Lymphoma Association, Leukaemia CARE, CLL Support Association and Bloodwise.

There have been several studies that demonstrate the negative psychological impact of blood cancers on patients.¹ A 2016 global patient survey with nearly 4,154 respondents from across 72 countries developed by the Lymphoma Coalition showed that lymphoma patients were most impacted emotionally by changes in relationships with others, concerns about body image and depression. Patients were also impacted by financial stresses, a loss of self-esteem and isolation.² Another study found that the emotional quality of life of patients with chronic lymphocytic leukaemia, one of the most common forms of adult leukaemia, was significantly reduced.³

Mindfulness expert Dr Caroline Hoffman commented, “When you practice mindfulness, you are training your brain into new and positive habits of coping and responding to the many stressful events that may be happening in your life. You may have recently been diagnosed with a blood cancer or waiting to see if or how your condition progresses. You may be undergoing tests or treatments, or perhaps you are in remission. These mindfulness podcasts are aimed to support you wherever you might find yourself right now and will help you develop inner resilience.”

Zack Pemberton-Whiteley, Head of Campaigns and Advocacy at Leukaemia CARE, said “Mental wellbeing is extremely important, but the emotional and psychological impact of a leukaemia diagnosis is often overlooked. It’s easy to fixate on an issue and lose sight of the bigger picture of how it’s
affecting you, so it is important that anybody affected by a leukaemia diagnosis takes time to step back and reflect on their wider thoughts and feelings. Mindfulness offers a way of doing this. We need more resources such as these to help patients cope with feelings of anxiety and depression.”

David Innes, Chair of the Chronic Lymphocytic Lymphoma Support Association, commented, “Living with a blood cancer is very different from living with a solid tumour. For example, when diagnosed with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia (CLL), patients are often managed in early stages through a Watch and Wait strategy. The psychological implications of being told you have cancer but then being told you won’t be actively treated cannot be underestimated. In unsettling times such as these, mindfulness techniques could make a significant difference to patients and their loved ones.”

Stephen Scowcroft, Head of Business Development at the Lymphoma Association said, “The beauty of these mindfulness podcasts is that they can be used anywhere and at any time. They’re not only designed for patients but for loved ones and carers as we know a blood cancer diagnosis affects whole families and not just individuals. You may wish to listen to the podcasts if you’re having trouble sleeping or to use the practices to calm yourself while waiting for test results. Dr Hoffman’s advice to blood cancer patients is there is no right or wrong way to practice mindfulness.”

Reta Brownlow, Head of Patient Services at Bloodwise, said, “The psychological impact of a blood cancer diagnosis should not be underestimated, not only for patients but also their family and friends. Mindfulness practice has been shown to reduce emotional stress and anxiety so it’s exciting that there is now a set of mindfulness resources that have been created specifically for the needs of blood cancer patients – which might be utilised by their support network too.”

The podcast series can be accessed by visiting www.abbvie.co.uk/mindfulness.html. There are three modules: mindfulness of the breath; mindfulness of the soles of the feet and; mindfulness of the body, as well as an introductory filmed interview from Dr Hoffman explaining how to get the best from each practice.

-ENDS-

About Dr Caroline Hoffman, OAM, PhD (Mindfulness), RN, BSW
Dr Hoffman began her personal practice of mindfulness in 1992 and introduced mindfulness practices to people affected by cancer and staff at the Royal Marsden Hospital in 2001 where she was one of the first Nurse Consultants. She has taught Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) at the charity Breast Cancer Haven to people affected by breast cancer since 2005, with these courses now being available to anyone. Dr Hoffman trained to teach MBSR at the University of Massachusetts in 2004. Since then she has continued to teach mindfulness and also supported and supervised new teachers. Dr Hoffman completed her PhD in mindfulness at the University of Southampton in 2009, results from which were published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology in 2012.
In 2011, she taught Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction in a subsequent research study evaluating MBSR in women with advanced breast cancer in Southampton. She is Clinical and Research Director for the national charity Breast Cancer Haven. She was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to breast cancer in June 2014.

About AbbVie
AbbVie is a global, research-driven biopharmaceutical company committed to developing innovative advanced therapies for some of the world’s most complex and critical conditions. The company’s mission is to use its expertise, dedicated people and unique approach to innovation to markedly improve treatments across four primary therapeutic areas: immunology, oncology, virology and neuroscience. In more than 75 countries, AbbVie employees are working every day to advance health solutions for people around the world. For more information about AbbVie, please visit us at www.abbvie.co.uk.

AbbVie in oncology
AbbVie is striving to outsmart cancer by working with scientists, physicians, industry peers, patient advocacy groups and most importantly patients, to discover, develop and provide new therapies that will have an impact on the lives of people around the world affected by cancer. Our goal is to provide medicines that make a significant change in cancer treatment and outcomes for cancer patients. By exploring and investing in new pathways, technologies and approaches, AbbVie is breaking ground in some of the most widespread and difficult-to-treat cancers. We are also exploring solutions to help patients obtain access to our cancer medicines. With the acquisition of Pharmacyclics in 2015 and Stemcentrx in 2016, and through several collaborations, AbbVie’s oncology portfolio consists of marketed medicines and a pipeline containing multiple new molecules being evaluated worldwide in more than two hundred clinical trials for over 20 different tumour types.

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References