

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Grünenthal dedicated to improving pain management

Making a difference with CHANGE PAIN®

Effective support for healthcare professionals starts off its 4th year

Aachen, 21 December 2011. “No time to rest in 2012” was one of the conclusions of the 6th CHANGE PAIN® Advisory Board meeting. The Board identified “Pain in the Elderly” as the next topic to be tackled by the initiative. Treating the elderly differs from treating younger patients as there are many physiological changes which have to be taken into account. The Advisory Board meeting took place in Munich early December with the goal of identifying challenges and shortcomings in pain therapy which need to be addressed in future.

Over two years ago the CHANGE PAIN® Initiative was set up by the German pain expert Grünenthal: This pan-European initiative aims to enhance the understanding of the needs of patients with severe chronic pain and to develop solutions to improve chronic pain management.^{1,2} Since then numerous activities in the areas of research, publication and education were kicked off across Europe to achieve these goals. Apart from establishing a sophisticated medical education program, easy to use tools to support physicians in improving management of chronic pain have been successfully developed.

Supporting physicians effectively

The CHANGE PAIN® Advisory Board includes 21 international pain experts. On behalf of EFIC®, Professor Hans-Georg Kress, newly appointed president, has joined the board as a chair of the initiative. Over the past two years the experts have been meeting regularly with the aim of initiating activities to optimise chronic pain management. Their achievements so far are impressive, particularly in the field of education:

More than 15,000 physicians have participated in the PAIN EDUCATION program by completing one of the four eCME modules or taking part in one of the numerous workshops across Europe. With the 5th module on neuropathic pain, which has just gone online, the education program now offers another important topic for physicians. In addition to this, over 60 (inter-)national publication projects have been realised, including the new practical guide “Towards a multidisciplinary team approach in pain management”. This booklet provides guidance for healthcare professionals on how to set up a multidisciplinary team – an aspect which is

becoming increasingly relevant. The PAIN EDUCATION program and practical guide can be accessed via www.change-pain.com.

To make physicians' daily practice easier and thereby support them effectively, the CHANGE PAIN® Initiative has developed valuable tools such as the CHANGE PAIN® Scale. This scale – like all tools provided by the initiative – helps to improve physician-patient communication by identifying key elements of treatment success and patient expectations. Over 250,000 scales and documentation forms have already been distributed in 12 European countries. The CHANGE PAIN® Scale Documentation Form, which is designed to follow up the individual patient's treatment success, can also be downloaded from www.change-pain.com. At a country-level further tools have been created and are available via the local CHANGE PAIN websites.

No time to rest: Pain in the Elderly is the next focus

However, there are further challenges waiting to be met in the management of chronic pain. One example is the treatment of elderly pain patients. In Europe there is a growing population in the 65-and-over age group: Within a population of more than 500 million in the EU-27 countries, the percentage of people in the age group > 65 years has been 17.4 % in 2010. This figure is expected to increase to about 30 % in 2060, which emphasizes the growing relevance of this age group.³ “Elderly people as well as many physicians tend to believe it is normal to have pain when aging,” said Professor Hans-Georg Kress, new chairman of the CHANGE PAIN® Initiative: “For this reason, and due to a high level of misinterpretation, pain is often not diagnosed and thus undertreated. These issues need to be addressed in order to be able to provide pain relief and improve the quality of life in elderly people.”

With regards to treatment, one has to keep in mind that elderly people often suffer from more than one illness, which may also require treatment with medications, and thus increasing the likelihood of drug-drug interactions. Therefore special considerations are necessary in regard to the administration of additional drugs to this patient group by the physicians.

In order to raise awareness of these challenges, the CHANGE PAIN® Initiative has decided to conduct according research, publish results and educate healthcare professionals with the aim of improving pain management in this vulnerable and growing population. One goal is to set up a new European accredited eCME module on this topic within the framework of PAIN EDUCATION.

About CHANGE PAIN®

CHANGE PAIN® aims to enhance the understanding of the needs of patients with severe chronic pain and to develop solutions to improve chronic pain management.

Initiated by the German pain expert Grünenthal and endorsed by the European Federation of the IASP® Chapters (EFIC®), the initiative involves pain experts from across Europe. The international Advisory Board is chaired by Professor Hans-Georg Kress, Chair of the Department of Special Anesthesia and Pain Therapy, Medical University/AKH Vienna, Austria and President of EFIC®, and Dr Gerhard H. H. Müller-Schwefe, MD, Head of Centre for Interdisciplinary Pain Therapy & Palliative Care, Goeppingen, Germany and President of the German Pain Association (DGS). Key objectives of CHANGE PAIN® are to generate a better understanding of physicians' and patients' perspectives, publish the results of research projects and communicate findings in scientific publications, as well as to increase knowledge of pain physiology to facilitate individual treatment decisions. More information: www.change-pain.com

About EFIC®

The European Federation of IASP® chapters (EFIC®) is a multidisciplinary professional organisation in the field of pain science and medicine, made up of the most important European pain societies. Established in 1993, EFIC® represents 35 countries and close to 20,000 scientists, physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, psychologists and other healthcare professionals across Europe, who study pain and treat patients in pain. More information: www.efic.org

About the Grünenthal Group

The Grünenthal Group is an independent, family-owned international research based pharmaceutical company headquartered in Aachen, Germany. Building on its unique position in pain, its objective is to become the most patient-centric company and to be a leader in therapy innovation. Altogether, the Grünenthal Group has affiliates in 35 countries worldwide. Grünenthal products are sold in more than 100 countries and approx. 4,900 employees are working for the Grünenthal Group globally. In 2010, Grünenthal reached revenues of about 910 Mio €. More information: www.grunenthal.com

Contact:

Grünenthal GmbH

Frank Schönrock

Phone: +49 241 569-1568

Fax: +49 241 569-3539

frank.schoenrock@grunenthal.com

Current press materials are available in the press section at www.grunenthal.com and www.change-pain.com.

References

¹ Varrassi G, et al. : Pharmacological treatment of chronic pain – the need for CHANGE. *CMRO*; Vol. 26, No. 5, 2010, 1231–1245

² Müller-Schwefe et al.: Make a CHANGE: optimising communication and pain management decisions. *CMRO*; Vol. 27, No. 2, 2011, 481–488

³ Demography Report 2010. European Commission/EUROSTAT, accessed at <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/population/introduction>