



There is hope for the “Agony of Hives”

*Sanofi and The Lebanese Society of Allergy & Immunology
raise awareness of Chronic Urticaria during the world allergy week*

Beirut, April 12, 2017 – Under the theme “The Agony of Hives – What to do when welts and swelling do not go away”, Sanofi and the Lebanese Society of Allergy and Immunology organized a media briefing session to address Chronic Urticaria, shedding light on its triggers, symptoms and treatments.

Chronic Urticaria is defined as episodic or daily hives lasting for at least six weeks and impairing quality of life ^[1]. Up to 1.8% ^[2] of the population worldwide currently suffers from chronic Urticaria. More research on the global prevalence of the disease is needed. Lebanon is joining the global efforts and this year’s theme comes in line with the World Allergy Week 2017 (WAW) held in parallel in 97 national members societies.

“The World Allergy Organization (WAO) during its annual WAW-2017 focused on raising awareness of chronic Urticaria- a frustrating illness. The itching interferes with concentration, daily activities, wellness, and sleep! The swelling can be disfiguring if it’s on the face, mainly the eyelids and lips, but also life threatening if it involves the respiratory organs (tongue and lungs)”, said Dr. Philip Rouadi, President, Lebanese Society of Allergy & Immunology, who emphasized on the fact that *“there is definite hope for those who suffer from Chronic Urticaria to improve their quality of life, and the allergist/immunologist is vital in accomplishing this”*.

Complications of chronic Urticaria can include insomnia, depression and poorer quality of life ^[3]. Chronic Urticaria can affect internal organs such as the lungs, muscles, and gastrointestinal tract. Symptoms include muscle soreness, shortness of breath, vomiting, and diarrhea ^[4]. When symptoms don’t go away, patients lose hope as suffering can last several years.

“Imagine the irritating itchy feeling you get when bitten by a mosquito. Doesn’t it drive you crazy? Now envision the feeling if bitten by tens of mosquitos at the same time all over your body! What if this is happening several times a day, several days a week, for months or even years! This is what a patient with Chronic Urticaria feels like, an undoubtedly miserable agonizing feeling”, said Dr. Fares Zaitoun, Vice President of the Lebanese Society of Allergy & Immunology.

The disease can last several years. Stopping treatment may result in the return of wheals and /or angioedema^[5]. Possible triggers are pain medications, alcohol, exercise, heat or cold, infections, insects or parasites, pressure on skin, scratching, stress, and sunlight ^[6].

“At Sanofi, we are committed to addressing the individual needs of patients who suffer from allergies and Urticaria in specific. We strive to create positive change to the society where we operate through providing healthcare education and access to global information”, said Oussama Hammoud, General Manager - Sanofi Consumer Healthcare in Levant. *“With that in mind, we thank our media partners for joining our hands to increase awareness on diseases and empowering people with the knowledge to improve the lives of patients”*.



According to World Allergy Organization, there are multiple options available for treating chronic Urticaria and allergists/immunologists have the necessary expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of chronic Urticaria and in the control of symptoms by prescribing the right medications or combination of medications that work and do not have adverse side effects (such as sedation, etc...). They also are able to teach patients about the condition, which is important in improving quality of life ^[7].

About Sanofi

Sanofi, a global healthcare leader, discovers, develops and distributes therapeutic solutions focused on patients' needs. Sanofi is organized into five global business units: Diabetes and Cardiovascular, General Medicines and Emerging Markets, Sanofi Genzyme, Sanofi Pasteur and Consumer Healthcare. Sanofi is listed in Paris (EURONEXT: SAN) and in New York (NYSE: SNY).

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References:

[1-2] World Allergy Organization:

<http://www.worldallergy.org/UserFiles/file/WorldAllergyWeek2017IsRaisingAwarenessofChronicUrticaria.pdf>

[3] Patients info: <https://patient.info/doctor/urticaria-pro>

[4] Hives and Your Skin, 2015. WebMD <http://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/guide/hives-urticaria-angioedema#2>

[5-6-7] World Allergy Organization: <http://www.worldallergy.org/UserFiles/file/2017WorldAllergyWeekInfographic.pdf>