

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
UNTIL WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2011, 10:30 AM CEST (4:30 am ET/USA)

Contact: Alzheimer's Association media line: 312-335-4078, media@alz.org
AAIC 2011 press room, July 16-21: +33 (0)1 57 25 20 35

**INTERNATIONAL SURVEY REVEALS ATTITUDES TOWARDS ALZHEIMER'S
DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT**

**- Alzheimer's Disease Feared Second Only to Cancer –
– Majority Would Seek A Diagnosis to Explain Memory Loss and Confusion –**

PARIS, July 20, 2011 – A survey reported today at the Alzheimer's Association® International Conference 2011 (AAIC 2011) in Paris by Alzheimer Europe and administered by the Harvard School of Public Health reveals that while people fear Alzheimer's second only to cancer, the overwhelming majority would go to the doctor, or take a loved one for evaluation, if they saw symptoms of memory loss and confusion.

Concerns that people with early symptoms of Alzheimer's might not seek medical evaluation, and thus miss opportunities for early detection and medical intervention, led Alzheimer Europe to survey the public about their attitudes and beliefs concerning the disease.

"The reason for the survey is the importance of promoting early Alzheimer's diagnosis, and the fact that early diagnosis is included in national dementia plans in England, France, Norway and Scotland," said Jean Georges, Executive Director of Alzheimer Europe. "In Europe, we are still encountering resistance from some in the medical profession due to their nihilistic views regarding the value of an early diagnosis and the benefits of current treatments. We were hoping that a public opinion survey would show a willingness to gain a diagnosis and the value of confronting the disease."

Data reported at AAIC 2011 are derived from a five-country survey conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health. The study was supported by a grant to Alzheimer Europe from Bayer. A total of 2,678 adults aged 18 and over were interviewed by telephone in France (n=529), Germany (n=499), Poland (n=509), Spain (n=502), and the United States (n=639) in February 2011.

"According to the World Alzheimer's Report 2010, Alzheimer's is the most significant social and health crisis of the 21st century," said William Thies, PhD, Alzheimer's Association Chief Medical and Scientific Officer. "The overwhelming numbers of people whose lives will be altered by Alzheimer's disease and dementia, combined with the staggering economic burden on families and nations, make Alzheimer's the defining disease of this generation. However, if governments act

urgently to develop national research and care strategies with appropriate smart investment, the impact of Alzheimer's and dementia can be managed."

In four of the five countries, Alzheimer's was the disease that people were second most afraid of getting, behind cancer. In the fifth country, Poland, Alzheimer's was third behind cancer and heart disease. The percentage of respondents who most feared getting cancer/Alzheimer's were: France 41.0/26.9 percent, Germany 43.8/23.0 percent, Poland 43.1/12.1 percent, Spain 48.5/23.6 percent, U.S. 39.3/21.9 percent. A large proportion of respondents were worried that they or a family member will get Alzheimer's, with significant differences between the countries (43 percent to 95 percent).

This strong fear exists even though the survey shows that Alzheimer's is under recognized as a fatal disease, especially outside the U.S. The percentage of people who answered "yes" to the question, "Do you think that Alzheimer's disease is a fatal disease or not?" was: France 44.4 percent, Germany 32.7 percent, Poland 34.3 percent, Spain 41.7 percent, U.S. 61.0 percent

A very high percentage of respondents – more than eight in ten (85–95 percent) in each of the five countries – said that if they were exhibiting confusion or memory loss, they would go to a doctor to determine if the cause of the symptoms was Alzheimer's disease. The numbers were even higher (94–99 percent) for wanting a family member experiencing memory loss to see a doctor for evaluation.

Many of the respondents believe there is now an effective medical or pharmaceutical treatment to slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease and make the symptoms less severe (27–63 percent). Between 38 and 59 percent believed there was a reliable test currently available to determine if a person is in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease (though neither of these statements is true).

"Many of the public have high expectations about the possibilities of treatment alternatives and medical testing. It is important for doctors to talk to patients about what treatment and testing options are or are not available," said Robert Blendon, ScD, Professor of Health Policy and Political Analysis from the Harvard School of Public Health.

Respondents expressed strong support for increasing government spending for research on new treatments for Alzheimer's disease: France 82.6 percent, Germany 68.2 percent, Poland 74.7 percent, Spain 83.0 percent, U.S. 67.4 percent. However, the majority of survey respondents said it "would not make much difference" in how they voted for a candidate for national office.

"The fear and concern uncovered by our survey is evidence of the urgency with which the public wants the Alzheimer's issue addressed, and eventually eliminated. Governments should follow the expressed desires of their constituents and increase funding for Alzheimer's research," Georges said.

"The willingness to get a diagnosis that was expressed by the survey respondents is encouraging, however better public education is needed. We need to address potentially unrealistic expectations about the availability of a definitive early test and effective treatment for the disease, while providing positive reasons for seeking a diagnosis in the absence of disease modifying treatments," Georges added.

About AAIC

The Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC) is the world's largest conference of its kind, bringing together researchers from around the world to report and discuss groundbreaking research and information on the cause, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders. As a part of the Alzheimer's Association's research program, AAIC serves as a catalyst for generating new knowledge about dementia and fostering a vital, collegial research community.

About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research, to provide and enhance care and support for all affected, and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's. Visit www.alz.org or call 800-272-3900.

* Robert J. Blendon, ScD, Jean Georges et al. Five-country survey of public experiences, attitudes and beliefs concerning Alzheimer's disease and the value of a diagnosis (Funder: Bayer)

About AAIC

The Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC) is the world's largest conference of its kind, bringing together researchers from around the world to report and discuss groundbreaking research and information on the cause, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders. As a part of the Alzheimer's Association's research program, AAIC serves as a catalyst for generating new knowledge about dementia and fostering a vital, collegial research community.

About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research, to provide and enhance care and support for all affected, and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's. Visit www.alz.org or call 800-272-3900.

#

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
UNTIL WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2011, 10:30 AM CEST (4:30 am ET/USA)