



## **New Study Presented at the Annual European Congress of Rheumatology (EULAR 2018) Reveals Insights About Women with Chronic Rheumatic Diseases During Their Pregnancy Journey**

- Survey reveals that women of childbearing age with chronic rheumatic diseases experience unique challenges, and suggests many experience a lack of guidance and consistent information regarding family planning and treatment during their pregnancy journey and breastfeeding
- Some women surveyed chose to delay their plans for pregnancy or to interrupt their treatment during family planning
- Findings point to a need for greater awareness of disease management options, earlier consultation with physicians and alignment on best care to optimize outcomes for mother and infant

**Brussels, Belgium – 15 June 2018** – UCB, a global biopharmaceutical company focusing on immunology, neurology and bone treatment and research, today presents findings from a patient survey entitled “Fears and Misconceptions of Women with Chronic Rheumatic Disease Along Their Journey to Motherhood” at the Annual European Congress of Rheumatology (EULAR 2018), taking place in Amsterdam, June 13-16, 2018. Findings from 622 women across Europe, the United States, and Japan with chronic rheumatic diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis (RA), psoriatic arthritis (PsA) and axial spondyloarthritis (axSpA), suggest that women with chronic rheumatic diseases face unique challenges during their childbearing years that may be linked to decisions to delay pregnancy and interrupt treatment. Study authors suggest that these findings point to a need for greater access to reliable and consistent information.

Although it is recommended that women of childbearing age consult their healthcare team regarding disease control and family planning early on in their reproductive journey, fewer than half (46%) of women surveyed visited a healthcare professional (HCP) prior to becoming pregnant, and a majority of these women (69%) had to initiate these discussions themselves. While information provided by HCPs was generally satisfactory, some patients still felt they lacked information on the impact of their treatment decisions on pregnancy (38%) and breastfeeding (24%). Many women surveyed chose to either delay their plans to become pregnant (54%), or to discontinue their treatment before becoming pregnant (20%), and in the majority of cases, women indicated it was their idea to do so (68%). Almost half (46%) of women who delayed their decision to become a mother said they did so out of concern they may pass their condition on to their child.

“Survey results suggest that for some, the decision to delay pregnancy or stop treatment may be linked to a lack of guidance and reliable information, indicating a strong need for greater disease awareness and access to trustworthy educational materials to inform discussions about treatment and family planning,” said Dr. Rebecca Fischer-Betz, Department of Rheumatology, University Hospital of Düsseldorf, Duesseldorf, Germany. “Findings support the idea that it’s important for patients and HCPs to work collaboratively from the start to

ensure women have the information they need to make informed decisions regarding treatment and family planning, assuring optimal outcomes for both mother and child.”

About a third (32%) of women reported having inadequately controlled disease activity during pregnancy, while 22% reported disease worsening. Determining a treatment plan that is suitable during family planning is a complex decision to be made in consultation with one’s healthcare team, yet only 65% percent of patients reported having aligned a treatment plan between their different HCPs.

“Navigating chronic rheumatic diseases and pregnancy can lead to uncertainty for many women,” said Emmanuel Caeymaex, Executive Vice President, UCB Immunology. “These findings have informed global initiatives, such as the Autoimmune Motherhood (AIM) Movement and other efforts across the U.S. and Europe, to inform and connect women, helping support the best outcomes possible. Our goal is to empower women of childbearing age to have fruitful conversations with their healthcare team about managing their condition during their reproductive health journey. This kind of specialized support for patients with specific unmet needs is core to UCB’s patient value commitment.”

To support women living with chronic rheumatic diseases as they navigate their childbearing years, UCB is launching the AIM Movement, a global campaign with local reach designed to spread awareness about managing chronic rheumatic diseases throughout all stages of reproductive journey and encourage women to have informed conversations with their healthcare professionals. The AIM campaign awareness efforts will be rolled out in Europe and North America, in partnership with various local advocacy patient groups.

**About the Survey**

A total of 1,052 women living with chronic inflammatory diseases were surveyed across Europe (Germany, France, UK, Italy and Spain), the United States and Japan. Results presented this week at EULAR 2018 specifically highlight the experience of women aged 18-45 living with chronic rheumatic diseases (622/1052 participants), including axial spondyloarthritis (axSpA), psoriatic arthritis (PsA), and rheumatoid arthritis (RA).

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**About UCB**

UCB, Brussels, Belgium ([www.ucb.com](http://www.ucb.com)) is a global biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery and development of innovative medicines and solutions to transform the lives of people living with severe diseases in immunology or neurology. With more than 7,500 people in approximately 40 countries, the company generated revenue of € 4.5 billion in 2017. UCB is listed on Euronext Brussels (symbol: UCB). Follow us on Twitter: @UCB\_news

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