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GLOBAL COLON CANCER ASSOCIATION

GCCA Shows Support for New EU Survey on the Importance of Nonproprietary Naming of Biosimilars

March 18, 2014, BRUSSELS, Belgium -- At a roundtable event, Global Colon Cancer Association (GCCA) joined the Alliance for Safe Biologic Medicines, of which it is a founding member, and EuropaBIO in releasing a survey of European physicians' understanding and prescribing habits of biosimilars.

The survey, which included equal numbers of physicians in five Western European countries, gathered insight on their daily clinical practices with regards to biologic medicines, including biosimilars. Physicians included specialist in oncology as well as nephrology, rheumatology, dermatology, and endocrinology. The key findings showed that nonproprietary names matter to patient safety.

Topline survey results showed that:

- 53% of physicians surveyed felt that an identical nonproprietary name implies identical structure – which will not be the case for biosimilar medicines

- 61% of surveyed physicians said that identical nonproprietary names imply that the medicines are approved for the same indications – which is not necessarily the case

- 24% of reporting physicians record only the nonproprietary name of the biological product in the patient record

"The perspective of European physicians reflects hands-on clinical experience with biosimilars and the effect this has on patients who are awaiting proper treatment," stated Andrew Spiegel, Executive Director of GCCA. *"Biosimilars, may have different structure and therapeutic profile, to their reference product and these changes can have a significant impact on patients. Certainly in cancer patients, every moment of treatment counts. If one product is not producing the expected results or an adverse reaction, that must be quickly identified. This survey demonstrates there is still a lack of understanding on biosimilars and the need for distinguishable nonproprietary names to be given for all biologics, to avoid confusion."*

Since the introduction of biologics, the life expectancy of the advanced colon cancer patient has nearly tripled. Currently, there are three approved biologics for colon cancer. These new biologic agents are often referred to as monoclonal antibodies. In effect, these antibodies facilitate immune responses to rapidly proliferating cancer cells.

"Biologic medicines offer colon cancer patients new hope because of their ability to battle cancer in ways that other medicines cannot," continued Spiegel. *"Because these drugs are very complex and comparatively expensive, the development of safe and effective biosimilars is of great importance. GCCA wants to ensure colon cancer patients and patients everywhere have the best, most accessible treatments to help them on their journey towards wellness."*

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Andy Spiegel is a founding and steering committee member of the Alliance for Safe Biologic Medicines— an organization composed of diverse healthcare groups and individuals from patients to physicians, biotechnology companies that develop innovative and biosimilar medicines and others who are working together to ensure patient safety is at the forefront of the biosimilars policy discussion.

About GCCA:
The Global Colon Cancer Association is a global community, which enables colorectal cancer (CRC) patient groups worldwide to better serve their communities through sharing information and best practices. As part of that mission, we support efforts to create a safe and transparent pathway by which affordable biosimilar drugs can be accessible to all patients.