

Relationship Expert Teams Up with Pfizer to Address Intimacy and Relationship Issues for People Living with Chronic Diseases

Wednesday, February 08, 2017 - 03:30am

Logan Levkoff, Ph.D., addresses tough topics for those living with rheumatoid arthritis on Arthritis.com

Nationally-recognized relationship expert and author, Logan Levkoff, Ph.D., has partnered with Pfizer Inc. (NYSE:PFE) to fill a void in information available to people living with chronic diseases: relationship advice. Levkoff will address the topics of relationships and intimacy for those living with a chronic condition, like rheumatoid arthritis (RA), on the newly re-launched Arthritis.com site. The website is a place where people living with a chronic illness can find inspiration, lifestyle advice, tools, and disease information. While many Americans struggle with these issues, Pfizer has heard from some members of the RA community that they can be particularly challenging for those living with chronic diseases such as RA, and that information hasn't been widely available for this community until now.

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"I'm thrilled to be partnering with Pfizer on Arthritis.com to help provide insight on dealing with tough issues including self-love, dating and communicating with partners, which may be particularly difficult for people living with a chronic condition." These topics can be difficult for people living with a chronic condition, like RA, to face head-on as part of their day-to-day lives. In fact, one small study using self-administered questionnaires with those living with RA (n=57) revealed that more than half feel that their disease places limitations on intimacy and more than a third say that living with RA has strained their relationship with their partner.¹

"People living with RA have a lot to cover and discuss during doctor visits. Having a support system and educational resources are important when managing the disease," says Ara Dikranian, MD, Rheumatologist, Cabrillo Center for Rheumatic Disease. "Arthritis.com will help bring to light topics that may not have been discussed in-depth, and the content encourages people to take action and speak with their healthcare provider about ways to manage their condition beyond just treating symptoms."

As part of its commitment helping to improve the lives of people living with arthritis by providing education and awareness, Pfizer will continue to roll out new resources on Arthritis.com, focusing on under-addressed topics. "We know that many of the millions of people suffering from rheumatoid arthritis^{2,3} are struggling with more than just the physical symptoms of the disease," says Angela Hwang, Global President Inflammation and Immunology at Pfizer. "We are developing resources like Arthritis.com to help provide information on topics

that go beyond medicine. We are committed to supporting the overall wellbeing of people with RA.”

About Arthritis.com Arthritis.com is Pfizer’s newly updated support site where people can find inspiration, advice, tools and disease information to help manage RA in daily life. In addition to articles on love, relationships, dating and financial advice, the website also offers information on exercise, nutrition, parenting, and spirituality. Techniques on how to set treatment goals are also available via the website. About Rheumatoid Arthritis Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic, inflammatory autoimmune disease that causes a range of symptoms, including stiffness and swelling in the joints,^{4,5} particularly those in the hands, feet and knees.³ Although the exact cause of RA is unknown,³ it is considered to be an autoimmune disease, because the immune system in people with RA mistakes the body’s healthy tissues as a threat and attacks them.³ Some people are at increased risk of developing RA, including people with a family history of RA, smokers and women.⁶ Three times as many women are affected by RA compared to men.³ Approximately 1.6 million Americans are trying to manage symptoms of RA.^{7,8} It can develop at any time during adulthood, but it usually occurs between 40 and 70 years of age.² About Osteoarthritis Osteoarthritis (OA) is a chronic condition characterized by the breakdown of joint cartilage.⁹ OA is the most common form of arthritis.⁹ While the cause of OA is unknown, it occurs when cartilage breaks down in the joints over time. OA can occur in any joint, but is the most common in the knees, hips, hands, and spine. OA affects nearly 27 million adults in the U.S.,⁹ and is the most common of all types of arthritis in the U.S.⁹ About 1 in 2 people in the U.S. will experience OA of the knee in their lifetime.

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9 National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS). Handout on health: osteoarthritis. Updated April 2015. Accessed August 10, 2016. Available at http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Osteoarthritis/.

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