Fast Facts about Crohn’s Disease and Colitis

June 2014

About Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD):

- Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) is the collective term for Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis.

- IBD is a chronic and largely hidden disease affecting approximately 1 in 250 people aged 5-49 nationally.

- Australia has one of the highest rates of prevalence and incidence in the world and each year more and more young people are being diagnosed.

- Over 75,000 Australians have Crohn’s disease or ulcerative colitis (and more than 5 million worldwide have the disease).

- The number of Australians with IBD is expected to rise dramatically within the next ten years with numbers set to rise to 100,000.

- Research estimates that national total hospital costs for IBD are approximately $100 million per annum. (PwC, ‘Improving inflammatory bowel disease care across Australia, March 2013)

- Productivity losses attributable to IBD in 2012 are estimated at over $360 million. An additional $2.7 billion of financial and economic costs have been associated with the management of IBD (PwC report as above).

- Crohn’s disease is incurable and is associated with a 47% increase in the mortality risk.

- Ulcerative Colitis is only ‘curable’ through radical surgery and if untreated may also lead to death.

- Typical symptoms include the frequent and urgent need to use the toilet, diarrhea, bleeding, loss of appetite, fatigue and weight loss.

- IBD is more prevalent than, Multiple Sclerosis and Rheumatoid Arthritis. (2007 Deloitte Access Economics)
IBD is commonly diagnosed between the ages of 15 and 35 years, and can cause significant disability and lengthy absences from school and workplaces.

- It is not contagious or caused by stress or diet.
- Medications can reduce the inflammation, but surgery is often required to remove diseased portions of the intestine or treat complications.
- A proper diet can help relieve symptoms and replace lost nutrients.
- IBD is NOT the same as IBS or irritable bowel syndrome and is much more serious.
- Many people are confused about two distinct gastrointestinal disorders -- IBD and IBS. Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a condition that produces some symptoms similar to those of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), but they are not the same condition, and they involve very different treatments.

About Crohn’s & Colitis Australia™ (CCA)

- CCA is the national peak body representing people with Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis in Australia.
- May is Crohn’s & Colitis Awareness Month.
- CCA’s mission is to support the Crohn’s and colitis community with a focus on confidential support programs, including education, advocacy, counselling, increasing awareness and generating and utilising funds for research and programs.
- CCA’s Helpline receives more than 1000 calls a year.
- More than 2000 people attend CCA IBD information forums around Australia every year.
- CCA is a registered not-for-profit national organization that until recently received no government funding. It is funded almost entirely through membership fees, donations and fundraising activities.
- In 2013, CCA was awarded a $50K grant to commence a Volunteer Outreach Program in Victoria only. In May 2014, it was announced CCA had been successful in our application for a second grant of $50K to further expand our outreach program in rural and regional Victoria.
- In December 2014, the Federal Government awarded CCA a $500,000 grant for a program to improve IBD care, with the expectation that CCA would secure an equivalent amount from the philanthropic and corporate communities.

For more information visit www.crohnsandcolitis.com.au or phone 1800 138 029.