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Findings From Global Survey Help Understand Fertility Trends And Barriers To Seeking Medical Help Against Infertility

- **Over 10,000 responded to the largest international study aimed at understanding the decision-making process of couples trying to conceive**
- **Findings help clarify disparities in fertility rates**
- **Survey reveals barriers that may prevent couples with infertility from seeking medical help and pursuing treatment**

Rome, Italy, June 28, 2010 – Merck Serono, a division of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, today announced the outcomes of the Global survey “Starting Families” at the 26th edition of the annual meeting of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE). Developed in collaboration with Cardiff University, and supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in the United Kingdom, and the International Consumer Support for Infertility (iCSi) network, the survey aimed at better understanding the decision-making process of couples trying to conceive. Over 10,000 women and men who were trying for a baby, from eighteen countries¹ responded to the survey.

The key findings reveal that:

- Social value attached to parenthood and children, and associated economic benefits, are key factors that help explain differences in fertility rates across

¹ Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

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countries, followed by subjective sense of economic security, personal and relational readiness.

- Knowledge of fertility risk factors and facts that help decide when to seek fertility medical help is low and varies considerably across countries. Less than half of respondents know that a couple is considered infertile and should seek help after 12 months of trying to conceive, unless over 35 years of age when it should be after 6 months. Furthermore, about half of respondents erroneously believe that women in their 40s have a similar chance of getting pregnant as women in their 30s. The majority are not aware that sexually transmitted diseases, mumps after puberty (for men), or being overweight (for women) puts fertility at risk.
- Acknowledgement of a fertility problem, being able to disclose it to partner, family and friends, knowing about the availability of reimbursed treatment and positive attitude towards treatment are among the key factors characterizing people who seek medical help. 40% of respondents do not know whether reimbursed treatment is available.
- The majority of respondents are positive about success rates and safety of fertility treatments. However, there is a strong feeling that treatment is expensive and can be stressful. People are more aware of more complex treatments like In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) than medications to restore ovulation.
- People do not see mass media, including newspapers, magazines, radio and television, as a helpful source of fertility information and consider the quality of information about fertility treatments delivered by mass media as low.

“The survey helps clarify the disparities in fertility rates around the world. Policy makers looking to reverse declining fertility rates will have to find ways to re-establish the value of parenthood in society and tackle those individual decision factors that are more prevalent in their own countries. The survey data provides valuable insights to help

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design such policies,” said Professor Jacky Boivin of Cardiff School of Psychology, Cardiff University, and co-leader of the survey.

“With more people postponing parenthood to a later age, understanding fertility risks and seeking timely medical advice becomes more important,” said Fereydoun Firouz, Head of the Global Business Unit Fertility and Metabolic Endocrinology at Merck Serono. “We will address knowledge gaps and barriers revealed by the survey in our communication to couples looking to conceive or going through fertility treatment. We hope that the survey will improve understanding of contemporary fertility issues among all fertility stakeholders and enable them to provide further support to couples who are looking to start or enlarge their families.”

The detailed findings of the survey will be discussed in oral presentations at ESHRE and published in the media report *Fertility – the Real Story*. The report will be available online on www.fertility.com and www.icsicommunity.org.

About the “Starting Families” survey

Methodology

The final sample consisted of 10,045 people currently trying to conceive.

The key characteristics of the population that participated to the research are as follows:

- 83% women, 17% men.
- 61% of the sample declared that they are treated for infertility problems
- Respondents from Europe represent 54% of the total sample, whereas the Americas represent 27%, APAC 16% and other countries, 3%.

How to interpret the data

Results are not representative of the general population, but are representative of the people that participated in this survey. Therefore, each time that “people”, “men”, “women” is cited in the text above, one should read it as people, men, women who participated in the survey. Likewise, each time that a country is mentioned, one should read the statement as representative of the participants interviewed from that country, and not necessarily representative of the total population of that country.

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About Merck Serono and Fertility Treatment

Merck Serono is the world leader in fertility treatments, and the only company to offer a full portfolio of fertility drugs for every stage of the reproductive cycle and recombinant versions of the three hormones needed to treat infertility: GONAL-f® (follitropin alfa), to stimulate the ovaries and produce eggs in women and spermatogenesis induction in men; Luveris® (lutropin alfa), to stimulate follicular development in women who are profoundly LH deficient; Ovitrelle® (choriogonadotropin alfa), to help follicles mature and release eggs; Pergoveris® (follitropin alfa/lutropin alfa) to stimulate follicular development in women with severe LH and FSH deficiency; Cetrotide® (cetorelix acetate) to prevent a premature ovulation; and Crinone® (progesterone gel), to help establish and maintain a pregnancy. Not all products are available in all markets.

About Merck Serono

Merck Serono is the division for innovative prescription pharmaceuticals of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a global pharmaceutical and chemical company. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, Merck Serono discovers, develops, manufactures and markets innovative small molecules and biopharmaceuticals to help patients with unmet medical needs. In the United States and Canada, EMD Serono operates through separately incorporated affiliates.

Merck Serono has leading brands serving patients with cancer (Erbix®[®], cetuximab), multiple sclerosis (Rebif®[®], interferon beta-1a), infertility (Gonal-f®[®], follitropin alfa), endocrine and metabolic disorders (Saizen®[®] and Serostim®[®], somatropin), (Kuvan®[®], sapropterin dihydrochloride) as well as cardiometabolic diseases (Glucophage®[®], metformin), (Concor®[®], bisoprolol), (Euthyrox®[®], levothyroxine). Not all products are available in all markets.

With an annual R&D expenditure of more than € 1 billion, Merck Serono is committed to growing its business in specialist-focused therapeutic areas including neurodegenerative diseases, oncology, fertility and endocrinology, as well as new areas potentially arising out of research and development in autoimmune and inflammatory diseases.

About Merck

Merck is a global pharmaceutical and chemical company with total revenues of € 7.7 billion in 2009, a history that began in 1668, and a future shaped by approximately 33,600 employees in 64 countries. Its success is characterized by innovations from entrepreneurial employees. Merck's operating activities come under the umbrella of Merck KGaA, in which the Merck family holds an approximately 70% interest and free shareholders own the remaining approximately 30%. In 1917 the U.S. subsidiary Merck & Co. was expropriated and has been an independent company ever since.

For more information, please visit www.merckserono.com or www.merck.de