

EveryWoman Day photo stories tackle the taboo of ‘women’s troubles’

Submitted by: Purple Orchid

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EveryWoman Day is launching this year with a striking photo campaign to raise awareness and funds for poorly understood female health conditions which seriously limit quality of life as well as those which can kill.

It has been created by Purple Orchid, the women’s self-care company, in association with the Cystitis and Overactive Bladder Foundation, a charity which supports people with bladder conditions.

The first EveryWoman Day is Friday September 16 – in the middle of Sexual Health Week, Interstitial Cystitis Awareness Month and Gynaecological Cancer Awareness Month. It’s for Every Woman because of all the ordinary women who are doing everyday things with extraordinary strength all the time despite their pain and suffering. And Every Woman can join in, by adding to the website their story and a photo of their belly with a word painted on it which describes their condition or the part of it that bothers them most.

The need to talk about these unmentionable “women’s troubles” is highlighted by some shocking new statistics.

- A shocking 80% of women said Interstitial Cystitis/Painful Bladder Syndrome (IC/PBS) had caused intimacy problems with their partners – for 38% of them, that led to severe problems such as separation and divorce.
- Yet more than 40% of women with IC/Painful Bladder Syndrome waited FIVE YEARS or longer to get a diagnosis, according to a new survey by the COB Foundation.

It’s time to talk about these taboo topics. One of the reasons that so many female reproductive health conditions aren’t properly understood is that we don’t discuss them.

Gynae cancers are less talked about than breast cancer because we don’t want to discuss what happens “down below”. It’s all just “women’s troubles” – a tag which is still guaranteed to shut down questions and conversation.

Dr Karen Gardiner, MD of Purple Orchid, said: “We have started the campaign with photos of the names of some of the many conditions painted onto the bellies of women whose ages span five decades. Women’s troubles happen below the waist and above the knee, and we wanted to symbolise the fact that they have been kept under wraps, but they no longer need to be considered ‘below the belt’.

“There has been little drug development for many of these diseases for decades in part because money goes to better known and, some would argue, more important diseases.

“If we don’t talk about these conditions and their effect on our daily lives, that will never change. If the incidence and, more importantly, the impact is better understood, the pharmaceutical industry may

consider more research and subsequently, development.

“Since there are no cures for many of these conditions, women have to manage them for their entire lives. So by sharing information and experiences, we can reduce the feelings of isolation, more women can potentially improve their symptoms and reduce their suffering. Lives can be improved by talking about what works and what doesn’t, what makes things worse, how to cope with the debilitating effects and simply how we get through each day of pain, exhaustion, depression and other difficulties.”

EveryWoman Day is about ordinary women performing extraordinary feats every day, just to keep their families, their lives and/or their jobs on track – and who doesn’t know someone like that? Anything from bathing a newborn baby after you’ve had a Caesarian to putting breakfast out for kids before school when you’re in the middle of cancer treatment can be an incredible achievement.

It’s important that the conversation happens across the generations. It’s not always Mum who knows best, sometimes daughters have modern ideas or new information. And a modern girl’s problems can be recognised by an older woman who has lived through a similar experience in a different era. If we can acknowledge and celebrate our own strengths, share stories, inspire each other and make difficult topics easier to discuss, we can all live longer in better health.

A spokeswoman for the Cystitis and OverActive Bladder Foundation said: “In this day and age it is hard to believe that people have been waiting up to five years for a diagnosis of Interstitial Cystitis and Painful Bladder Syndrome. As a sufferer myself for 20 years I can see how things are changing for the better but we need to make it happen faster. The COB Foundation is here to make it happen.”

Dr Gardiner added: “We women can give ourselves a hard time about the things we haven’t done, rather than appreciating the things that we have achieved.

“So get involved, don’t be silent. Paint, scrawl or scribble your relevant word on your belly using lipstick, marker pen, face paint or whatever else works, take a photo and post it on the website and share on social media with your story. EveryWoman needs you.”

FOR HI-RES IMAGES AND MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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See EveryWoman Day (<http://everywoman.healthewomen.co.uk>)

www.purpleorchidpharma.com

About Purple Orchid Pharma Ltd

Purple Orchid is the women's self-care company. The concept of self-care rather than health care is all about being involved in what's good for you, rather than being passively treated for our various health issues. This is in line with life-course approach promoted by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. By taking care of ourselves as well as we do of our loved ones, and by making informed choices, we can live longer, in better health. Purple Orchid supports women from 16 to 66 and beyond, by providing relevant and reliable information about reproductive health and in some cases supporting self-care products. Our goal is to help women help themselves.