

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

First public awareness campaign

Persistent Depressive Disorder (PDD): A Mental Illness that Goes Largely Undetected

MONTREAL, May 29, 2017 - Today, La Fondation Compagnom is launching the first public awareness campaign about persistent depressive disorder (PDD), a little-known mood disorder that is reported to affect up to 6% of the population. Under the theme “PDD: KNOW IT. SPOT IT.”, the campaign, which will run until June 2, 2017, aims to spread awareness and understanding of this disorder to spark a conversation and exchanges around it.

Persistent depressive disorder (PDD), also known as dysthymia, is a chronic depressive mood disorder characterized by a depressed mood lasting most of the time, for at least two years. This (sometimes hereditary) disorder presents symptoms that are similar to those of major depressive disorder and that manifest with various levels of severity (mild, moderate and severe).

While anyone can show symptoms of PDD (young people and adults), the disorder is diagnosed two to three times more often in women than in men. A three-pronged approach combining medication, psychotherapy and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle is the recommended treatment option for PDD.

“We have launched this campaign to throw light on PDD and spark a conversation, but also to educate and support people living with PDD and their loved ones,” said Serge Choinière, Founding President of La Fondation Compagnom and campaign spokesperson. “I myself have had this disorder for several years, but I had never heard of it until I was diagnosed in 1999, at age 50. That shows how much awareness needed to be raised.”

Gustavo Turecki, M.D., Ph.D., Head, Depressive Disorders Program, Douglas Institute and Director, Réseau québécois sur le suicide et les troubles de l’humeur et troubles associés (RQSHA), and Jean-Pierre Guoin, family doctor, have signed on as spokespeople for the

campaign to help raise awareness—among the public, but also within the medical community—of the negative impacts of this disorder.

“Persistent depressive disorder is a little-known, and thus rarely diagnosed, illness, even though it affects a large proportion of the population. While people with PDD are usually able to function on an everyday basis, the symptoms are so subtle and insidious that they still suffer greatly,” explained Dr. Turecki.

“As a family doctor, listening to my patients, helping them put their situation into words and earning their trust is essential to my practice,” said Dr. Gouin. “For example, in cases of PDD, it is important to take the time to ask the right questions in order to provide a proper diagnosis.”

A number of actions and tools for spreading the word

A number of tools have been developed to raise awareness of persistent depressive disorder. [A video](#) and the website whatispdd.ca have been created to spread awareness of persistent depressive disorder.

The public will be invited to use the **#whatispdd** hashtag to view and share their experiences and various campaign tools (video, website, web banner, poster, etc.).

Many credible partners have decided to lend their voices to the campaign, including by sharing information with their networks: Revivre, the Fondation Tel-jeunes, Tel-Aide, Mouvement Action-Découverte, the Canadian Mental Health Association – Montréal Branch, Mouvement Santé mentale Québec, the Fondation Jeunes en Tête, the Regroupement des organismes de base en santé mentale (ROBSM), the Association de parents pour la santé mentale de Saint-Laurent Bordeaux-Cartierville (APSM), Parents et amis du bien-être mental du Sud-Ouest de Montréal, the Association québécoise pour la réadaptation psychosociale (AQRP), Phobies-Zéro, L’Abri en Ville and MONTREAL WALKS for mental health.

About La Fondation Compagnom

La Fondation Compagnom’s main mission is to promote better mental health in the population by implementing various preventive initiatives. To that end, La Fondation Compagnom works to organize and provide moments of respite and employment opportunities to emotionally or psychologically disadvantaged people, mainly through its professional and commercial operations such as hotel management and food services.

For more information about La Fondation Compagnom, visit compagnom.org/?lang=en.

Source: La Fondation Compagnom

Information and interview requests

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