



Bhaichung Bhutia in Kochi to share his experience on managing knee-osteoarthritis

Partners with Sanofi's national 'Steps that Count' initiative to appeal to younger arthritis patients (30-55 years) to get a timely diagnosis, and explore viscosupplementation as a treatment solution with their doctors

Kochi, June 27, 2015: Bhaichung Bhutia, former captain of India's football team, joined Sanofi's 'Steps that Count' initiative to raise awareness on knee osteoarthritis in the city today. Of all the joints, osteoarthritis of the knee joint is the most common as it is vulnerable to wear-and-tear. If not treated appropriately at the right time, the condition can lead to disability and a reduced quality of life. The 'Steps that Count' initiative encourages patients to live well with osteoarthritis by following **three** important steps, namely **Talk (About Treatment Options) - Control (Weight) – Exercise (6000 steps daily)**.

According to **Dr. Padmanabha Shenoy, Rheumatologist, CARE (Centre for Arthritis & Rheumatism Excellence)**, "Knee osteoarthritis which was commonly known to affect the elderly, is now seen as a rising cause of worry amongst the people in their 40s and limiting their daily activities. Currently, 80% of people between the age group of 30-55 years have some degree of movement limitation and 25% have disabling pain restricting their routine activities. If the disease is identified early and treated well, knee replacement surgery can be avoided."

Sedentary lifestyle, rising obesity, vitamin-D deficiency and poor dietary habits are all contributory factors for the early onset of knee osteoarthritis.

"The typical symptoms of knee arthritis are knee pain, swelling, pain while walking and climbing stairs. It is very common for young knee osteoarthritis patients to ignore early symptoms and not seek expert opinion" states **Dr. John Thayyil John, Senior Consultant, Adult Reconstruction Orthopedics, Lourdes Hospital**.

Traditionally, knee-osteoarthritis patients have been dependent on strong painkillers for temporary relief and when the condition worsened, knee replacement surgery often becomes the only option. Single shot viscosupplementation has been clinically proven to be a simple and innovative treatment to relieve knee pain, increase mobility to a large extent and prevent indiscriminate use of painkillers.

Dr. Jai Thilak, Professor in Orthopedics, Amrita Institute of Medical Science, commented, "Viscosupplementation is a direct local solution for a local problem. It involves injecting a fluid into the joint which mimics the natural synovial fluid and helps lubricate and cushion the diseased joint³. This makes it an effective and preferred option for young active individuals to maintain their active lifestyles. This is supported by OASIS (Osteoarthritis Synvisc One^{TM4} Indian Post Marketing Study) which concluded that viscosupplementation was well tolerated and effective in reducing knee pain in an osteoarthritis patient with a significant long-term (1 year) improvement of outcomes⁵".

Osteoarthritis (OA) Fast Facts

- India has the 2nd largest OA patient base in the world affecting more than 15 million people, with women forming a large portion of this population.¹
- Obesity is one of the major factors that increase the risk of OA² in India; 12.1% of the men and 16% of the women are obese²
- Kerala ranks 2nd among the states with the highest prevalence of obesity²



Speaking on the occasion **Dr. Senthilnathan Mohanasundaram, Director - Medical Affairs, Sanofi India** stated, "Improving disease awareness amongst patients can result in their leading a better quality of life and maximizing benefits of treatment solutions. 'Steps that Count' is Sanofi's initiative with Bhaichung Bhutia to share his experiences of dealing with knee osteoarthritis at an early age while continuing to lead an active lifestyle."

While sharing his experience **Bhaichung Bhutia** stated, "Timely intervention and the right treatment has helped me manage knee osteoarthritis effectively, which is an extremely painful condition and can impact many of the things we take for granted, such as walking, climbing stairs or sports. My doctor intervened at the right time and suggested viscosupplementation helped me maintain my active lifestyle. This simple treatment has today enabled me to live well with knee osteoarthritis and to continue to do the things I enjoy-- especially playing football."

Viscosupplementation usually does not have any side effects such as those associated with steroids and painkillers and seeking timely treatment from their doctors can help patients keep their joints healthy.

References:

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2. George AA, Anoop S, Jayan A, Nujum ZT. Obesity and severity of Osteoarthritis. Academic Medical Journal of India. 2014 Jun 28;2(2):52-55
3. Wang Y et al. Effects of Hylan G-F 20 supplementation on cartilage preservation detected by magnetic resonance imaging in osteoarthritis of the knee: a two-year single-blind clinical trial. BMC Musculoskelet Disord. 2011 Aug 24;12:195.
4. Synvisc One™ is a product of Sanofi- Synthelabo (India) Limited.
5. Pal S et al. Long-Term (1-Year) Safety and Efficacy of a Single 6-mL Injection of Hylan G-F 20 in Indian Patients with Symptomatic Knee Osteoarthritis. Open Rheumatol J, 2014; 8: 54-68

About Sanofi

Sanofi, a global healthcare leader, discovers, develops and distributes therapeutic solutions focused on patients' needs. Sanofi has core strengths in diabetes solutions, human vaccines, innovative drugs, consumer healthcare, emerging markets, animal health and Genzyme. Sanofi is listed in Paris (EURONEXT: SAN) and in New York (NYSE: SNY).

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