



## NEWS RELEASE

For Release: 8am MT, Sept 6, 2011

**IN SCHOOLS, HOMES AND THE WORKPLACE, THE COST OF COLDS IN CANADA IS “ENORMOUS” ACCORDING TO A REPORT RELEASED TODAY BY QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY RESEARCHERS. THEY SAY MORE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PUT ON PREVENTION.**

**KINGSTON, ON.** Queen’s University medical researchers today released the first report of its kind done in Canada on the impact of colds and flu on school absenteeism, the workplace, and the economy. The researchers reviewed more than **80 published clinical trials, studies and research projects** representing the work of over **300 researchers** from more than **100 universities and institutions**.

The research project was conducted by the Centre for Studies in Primary Care (CSPC), the research arm of the Department of Family Medicine at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario for Tamarind Healthcare Communications. It was headed by the CSPC director, Dr. Richard Birtwhistle. The study was supported by an independent educational grant from Afexa Life Sciences, the maker of COLD-FX®.

In their report entitled “Why the Common Cold and Flu Matter”, the researchers found:

- **1/3 of Canadian adults** have a sore throat, cold or flu in any given month. More common in women than men.
- **2/3 of Canadian adults** experiencing the first signs of a cold or flu used some type of self-treatment. Women were more likely to self treat and also consult a doctor as compared to men.
- **1/5 of Canadian adults** ignore symptoms altogether.
- Cough/cold remedies are the **second most commonly used medications** in Canada.
- **Canadians spend more than \$300 million a year** on over-the-counter cold and flu treatments and prescription antibiotics which, for the most part, neither “...ameliorate symptoms nor change the course of the illnesses.”

Prevention can play a role in reducing the spread of illnesses. Queen's researchers say that school-aged children and young adults play a significant role in the spread of respiratory illnesses. In the U.S. the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention pegs missed school days as a result of colds at 22 million a year. Studies by SDI, a research agency that tracks colds and flu in North America, have shown that there is an annual spike in colds and flu within the first two weeks of students' return to school in September. Something supported by Queen's researchers who cite a sharp increase in pediatric asthma cases as a result of rhinovirus infection, the primary cause of colds. They point out that young children with respiratory symptoms play a major role in spreading colds to family and friends and "... school-age children have been shown to introduce rhinovirus infections into their families 3 times more frequently than working adults."

But adults also play a significant role in the spread of infection. Queen's researchers found that the U.S. work force goes to work rather than calling in sick resulting in substantial losses of productivity and increased costs:

- **83% of participants** in a survey on work and illness say they continued to attend work or school while experiencing symptoms of an influenza-like illness.

All of this infection adds up to a significant economic cost as researchers cite direct costs due to lost productivity from colds at \$25 billion in the U.S. Taking into consideration both indirect (lost productivity) and direct (doctor visits and medicine) costs, the figure in the U.S. annually is \$40 billion. It costs employers twice as much in productivity losses for employees who come to work sick than for those who stay home.

Among their recommendations to lessen the impact of colds and flu on society, Dr. Birtwhistle and his colleagues concluded that more can and should be done to prevent them. They state, "Preventative measures that result in even a modest reduction in colds and flu would have a significant impact on reducing costs to the healthcare system and impact on the economy."

Professor Bhagirath Singh, Director of the Centre for Human Immunology and Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Western Ontario, commenting on the Queen's Study, says "The common cold is the world's most widespread illness, and while it's perceived as a 'nuisance' compared to far more serious illnesses, many in the medical community feel it deserves more attention because of the complications it can cause and its significant economic cost and societal impact. Respiratory infections like colds and the flu take an enormous amount of doctors' time, even though doctors really can't do much more than recommend plenty of rest and stay away from public places, schools or work. Thus, it has a significant impact on people's productivity in the workforce. A better strategy than treating these sicknesses is preventing them in the first place."

**About Afexa Life Sciences Inc.**

Afexa Life Sciences Inc., founded in 1992, strives to deliver the most trusted health brand on the planet through pioneering evidence-based natural medicines that empower people to achieve their health potential. The Company's patented ChemBioPrint<sup>®</sup> discovery and standardization technology enables the development of effective and safe medicines from complex natural sources, while ensuring reliable health benefits and batch-to-batch consistency. COLD-FX<sup>®</sup>, a ChemBioPrint product, is the Company's flagship product and Canada's leading over-the-counter (OTC) cold and flu remedy. It is officially indicated in Canada to help reduce the frequency, severity and duration of cold and flu symptoms by boosting the immune system. COLD-FX has a product license (NPN) and is supported by scientific evidence, including randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trials. The Company recently launched COLDSORE-FX in Canada and has a range of polymolecular drugs at various clinical and pre-clinical development stages. This product pipeline includes COLD-FX pediatric, AFX-2 for Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia, Dilexaponan for cholesterol management, HT-1001 for Oxidative Stress and a product for blood glucose management.

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