

**NEW SURVEY REVEALS COMMON, LOW-COST ANTIBIOTIC THERAPY MAY HAVE CONSIDERABLE BENEFITS FOR RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS PATIENTS, REPORTS ROAD BACK FOUNDATION**

**Road Back Foundation survey shows substantial improvements in disease, reduction in pain, severity of condition and better quality of life, as reported by rheumatoid arthritis and scleroderma patients.**

BOSTON, MA, FEBRUARY 15, 2006 - Results of a landmark survey of nearly 200 respondents with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) or scleroderma, who are currently taking antibiotics to treat their conditions, were released today by the Road Back Foundation, revealing that safe and cost-effective antibiotic therapy can have a clear and dramatic impact on the management of RA and improve patients' quality of life. According to the survey respondents, antibiotic therapy has demonstrated benefits over traditional prescription medications. The study, conducted by Harris Interactive®, was commissioned by the Road Back Foundation, a non-profit organization providing support and education to people suffering from rheumatic diseases including rheumatoid arthritis, a serious and often crippling condition.

"As the survey results suggest, antibiotics such as minocycline, a low-cost and commonly prescribed antibiotic with minimal side-effects, may offer an effective option for the newly diagnosed or a subset of patients who either fail or cannot tolerate conventional medications commonly prescribed for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis," said Diane Aronson, President, Road Back Foundation. "We know that a growing number of RA and other rheumatic patients are turning to antibiotic therapy to successfully manage their disease. These results suggest that others, too, could possibly benefit from this type of regimen"

**Key Findings - Pain Reduction, Improved Quality of Life and Tolerability**

Key findings from this survey include the impact of antibiotic therapy versus traditional medications for RA in the overall management of the disease, as well as its effect on pain, quality of life and tolerability.

A total of 452 voluntary respondents with rheumatic conditions completed the online survey (73% from the United States). Nearly 200 respondents had been diagnosed with RA or scleroderma and reported having been treated with antibiotic therapy for one month or more to manage their disease. Nearly nine in ten (89%) patients on antibiotic therapy reported positive improvements in their disease after this treatment; the vast majority (77%) within 6 months of initiating the treatment.

In addition, 82% reported a reduction in pain and 80% found it easier to manage daily routines and activities. 65% reported a reduction in the severity of their condition. More than half (55%) reported that they are taking less medications overall than prior to antibiotic treatment.

Patients on antibiotic therapy who have also taken traditional prescription medication were asked to compare the two types of treatments. They overwhelmingly reported improvements in key markers of the disease including slowed progression of their condition (92% for antibiotic treatment versus 39% for traditional medication); decreased levels of pain (91% antibiotic treatment versus 64% traditional medication); reduced stiffness (92% antibiotic treatment versus

58% traditional medication); and reduced swelling (89% antibiotic treatment versus 58% traditional medication).

Survey respondents also reported improvements from antibiotic therapy as compared to traditional medication in regards to quality of life (94% antibiotic treatment versus 54% traditional medication); increased ability to function at home (94% antibiotic treatment versus 57% traditional medication); and reduced fatigue (93% antibiotic treatment versus 38% traditional medication). For these respondents, 78% also said that antibiotics were more tolerable to take than traditional medications.

"The Road Back Foundation encourages patients to talk with their physician about their treatment, and if appropriate or needed, discuss the potential use of antibiotic therapy in the management of their disease," said David Trentham, M.D., a noted rheumatologist and Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, and Medical Director for the Road Back Foundation. "More research is needed, to add to the growing body of peer-reviewed published data on proven, safe and effective antibiotic therapy in the management of rheumatic conditions." Studies published in such journals as the *Annals of Rheumatology*, *Lancet* and *Arthritis and Rheumatism*, all support the findings that antibiotic therapy can be safe and effective for treating RA.

"These survey results indicate remarkable progress experienced by respondents in the study, following the use of antibiotic therapy," Aronson noted. "This is an important first step in qualifying real-life patient experiences and underscores the need for further research in order to better understand the potential and appropriate use of antibiotics by the broad community of rheumatic patients."

According to the Arthritis Foundation, more than 2.1 million Americans are affected by rheumatoid arthritis, an inflammatory disease that causes pain, stiffness, warmth, redness and swelling, affecting many different joints. There are several factors that may cause or impact diseases such as RA, including possible genetic predisposition, environmental conditions (i.e., a virus or bacteria) and hormonal influences.

While the results from this survey cannot be generalized to all sufferers of rheumatoid arthritis or scleroderma due to the non-randomized nature of data collection, the self-reported data are suggestive of the benefits of antibiotic therapy for many sufferers.

## **Methodology**

Harris Interactive® conducted the online survey on behalf of the Road Back Foundation between October 3 and 21, 2005, among 452 respondents with rheumatic conditions. Eligible respondents, defined as adults aged 18 and over who have been diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis or scleroderma and who have been on an antibiotic regimen for at least one month, completed a longer survey. Respondents either volunteered to take a survey included as a link on the Road Back Foundation website or other websites that provided information about rheumatoid arthritis and scleroderma, or were sent an invitation via email to participate in the survey. The email list was provided by the Road Back Foundation. Data were not weighted and therefore are only representative of those who were surveyed. This online sample is not a probability sample.

## About Harris Interactive®

Harris Interactive Inc. ([www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com)), based in Rochester, New York, is the 13th largest and the fastest-growing market research firm in the world, most widely known for The Harris Poll® and for its pioneering leadership in the online market research industry. Long recognized by its clients for delivering insights that enable confident business decisions, the company blends the science of innovative research with the art of strategic consulting to deliver knowledge that leads to measurable and enduring value. Harris Interactive serves clients worldwide through its United States, Europe ([www.harrisinteractive.com/europe](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/europe)) and Asia offices, its wholly-owned subsidiary Novatris in Paris, France ([www.novatris.com](http://www.novatris.com)), and through an independent global network of affiliate market research companies.

The Road Back Foundation ([www.roadback.org](http://www.roadback.org)) is a charitable non-profit association with an international network providing support and education about the application of antibiotic protocols for rheumatic diseases including rheumatoid arthritis and scleroderma.

*The Road Back Foundation does not engage in the practice of medicine. Consult with a physician to assess any medical treatment that is being considered. The Road Back Foundation encourages healthcare consumers to thoroughly investigate and understand all treatments and medications before proceeding. This material is for educational purposes only.*

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