

Press Release
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Brits unwilling to discuss matters of life and death

- **Research reveals we shy away from talking about death with partners or family**
 - **Brits less likely than other nations to consider assisted suicide**
 - **Only a third would choose to live forever if they could**

Huddersfield, October 2020:

While many of us enjoy dressing up as ghosts and skeletons for Halloween and El Dia de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead), it seems we are far less keen to talk about the subject of death, even with our nearest and dearest.

Research* by STADA Group, parent company of Thornton & Ross (T&R), found that three in 10 Brits of 2,010 surveyed had spoken to a partner about death and just over a third (36 per cent) had discussed it with their close family – making us among the most reluctant in Europe to talk about the subject. Just four per cent had discussed it with their doctor.

24,087 people were surveyed across 12 European countries as part of the STADA 2020 Health Report. The research uncovered that people in Finland were most likely to broach the topic, with almost three-quarters saying they had discussed dying with partners close family, or their doctor; Russians were even less likely than Brits to have spoken about death, with 55 per cent saying they saw no reason to raise the subject.

Not only that, in the UK we are not particularly well informed about the leading causes of death in Europe, with almost a quarter (24%) incorrectly believing diabetes was the primary cause – the highest national proportion in the survey and way above the 13 per cent survey average. Only 59 per cent of Brits correctly identified heart attacks as the primary cause of death, compared with an average of 62 per cent.

While just over two fifths (41 per cent) of Brits would consider assisted suicide if they were fatally ill and in constant pain, this made us the most reluctant in Western Europe; in total, three in five (61%) Brits could imagine availing of assisted dying, some way below the European average of 68%. Among Brits, 15 per cent disagreed with assisted suicide on religious grounds, above the 11% average.

In Germany, 78 per cent of people would consider taking advantage of help to end their life, while just 42 per cent of those in Serbia would share that view.

A higher than average number (47 per cent) of UK citizens had an accurate understanding of what the term “assisted dying” actually means – when a third party such as a doctor causes the death of a patient who expressly wishes to die. Only a quarter thought it referred to switching off a life support machine in response to a patient’s living will.



Even if eternal life were possible – and two-fifths (39 per cent) of UK people believe the concept to be “hocus pocus” – a third would not want to live forever, in line with the 33 per cent survey average. Just over a tenth (11 per cent) of Brits said they saw eternal life eventually becoming a reality (slightly above the 10 per cent European average). The 18 per cent of Brits who would like to live eternally if given the opportunity is a little above average and on a par with Italy; those in Poland and Spain would be the most receptive to the idea.

Roger Scarlett-Smith, executive vice-president for T&R, said the British reluctance to talk about death was not entirely surprising. “As a nation, we tend to be somewhat reserved when discussing topics such as death, sex and other deeply personal matters. What is surprising is that just four per cent of us have talked about death with our doctor.

“Research such as this is vital in helping us understand the gaps in people’s knowledge about some of the most common causes of death, which in turn enables us to see where more awareness work needs to be done.”

T&R develops, manufactures and supplies a wide range of branded over-the-counter medicines, dermatological solutions and other healthcare and hygiene products including KY Jelly[®], Zoflora[®], Hedrin[®] and Setlers[®] at its headquarters in Huddersfield.

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* The research was carried out for STADA group by market research institute Kantar Health during February and March this year. The 12 countries included in the research were the UK, Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Spain and Switzerland. A further 6,269 throughout Europe, including 1,042 UK adults, were questioned about the coronavirus outbreak in late April.

Issued on behalf of Thornton & Ross by Faith PR. For further information please email thorntonandross@faith-pr.co.uk or call 01484 599886.

About Thornton & Ross Ltd

Part of the STADA group, Thornton & Ross employs more than 500 people at its headquarters in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. With a strong track record of supplying the NHS with emollients and bone health products, the company offers a wide and diverse portfolio of generic pharmaceuticals and over the counter healthcare solutions including Covonia[®], Savlon[®] and Zoflora[®]. For more information go to www.thorntonross.co.uk

About STADA Arzneimittel AG

STADA Arzneimittel AG is headquartered in Bad Vilbel, Germany. The company focuses on a two-pillar strategy consisting of generics, including specialty pharmaceuticals and non-prescription consumer health products. Worldwide, STADA Arzneimittel AG sells its products in approximately 120 countries. In financial year 2019, STADA achieved adjusted group sales of EUR 2,608.6 million and adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) of EUR 625.5 million. As of December 31, 2019, STADA employed 11,100 people worldwide.

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