



spotlight on health

More Than Half Of Patients With Dupuytren's Disease Have Not Received Treatment, Survey Says

(NAPSA)—Shaking hands. Typing on a keyboard. Grasping tools. These are simple, daily activities that most people take for granted. But for people living with Dupuytren's disease, these types of tasks may become very challenging over time.

"I couldn't wear my wedding ring for seven years," said Karen Mercaldo, a Dupuytren's disease patient who was diagnosed in 1996. "I help my husband in his office with bookkeeping and use my computer to create flyers and invitations for my church groups. I often had trouble typing and doing the things I needed to do, and gave up activities that I had always enjoyed, such as knitting and playing the piano. You take your hands for granted until the things you do every day become difficult or impossible."

Dupuytren's disease progressively causes one or more fingers to slowly bend in toward the palm. The condition, which affects 13.5 to 27 million (3 to 6 percent) of adult Caucasians in the United States and Europe, is characterized by an excessive amount of collagen buildup in the hand. Over time, Dupuytren's can become a disabling condition that interferes with routine functions such as typing, grasping objects like a hammer, or driving. The cause is unknown and currently few treatment options exist. Surgery is the current standard of treatment for Dupuytren's disease but it can have variable outcomes.

According to a recent national survey of 300 patients with Dupuytren's disease, over two-thirds (69 percent) describe themselves as



This illustration depicts a hand with Dupuytren's disease.

"coping" with the condition and more than half (53 percent) admit to not being treated. The patients surveyed were required to have been diagnosed with Dupuytren's by a health care professional and to consent to participate in the survey. They were also required to have at least one symptom or have had a surgical treatment to treat their symptoms.

The survey also found that unfamiliarity with a range of treatment options was common among Dupuytren's patients.

A new Web site offers resources for patients who are unfamiliar with Dupuytren's disease. By visiting the Dealing with Dupuytren's Disease Web site at www.dealingwithdd.com/info, patients can learn more about the disease and available treatment options, obtain practical guidance on how to talk about the condition with a doctor, and hear other patients' perspectives on how the disease has impacted their lives.