



## spotlight on health

### National Survey Finds That For Some, Worry Is A Full-Time Job

(NAPSA)—Imagine holding a full-time job where the sole responsibility was to worry. Imagine this worry pervading every facet of your life—at work, at home, the time you spend with friends. Imagine this worry consuming your thoughts, preventing you from concentrating and causing you terrible sleep disturbances.

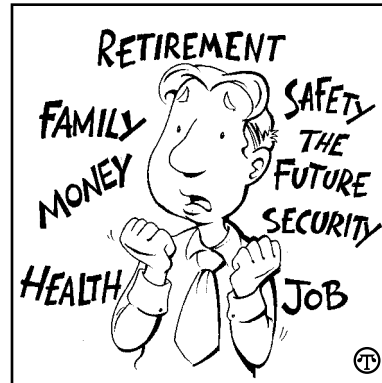
For people with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), a medical illness, this is a harsh reality. Affecting more than 10 million Americans, GAD is characterized by chronic, exaggerated tension and uncontrollable worry.

In a recent national survey conducted by Freedom From Fear, a national mental illness advocacy association, people with GAD worry nearly 40 hours each week, the equivalent of a full-time job. This is three times more than people without the illness. The survey of more than 1,200 people also revealed that nearly four out of five people with GAD are extremely concerned about how much they worry but can't control the worrying. In addition, the people with GAD polled are nearly three times more likely than the general public to have difficulty sleeping at night due to their worry.

"There were times when I worried so much that it was impossible for me to concentrate at work or to enjoy spending time alone because my anxieties were overwhelming. I worried about my future, my retirement and about senseless things," stated Gail Verzwylt, a 55 year old woman living with generalized anxiety disorder for three years. "Most people can wake up feeling refreshed, but because my worrying kept me up at night, I often had difficulty functioning. I had uncontrollable thoughts and worries about my health, job, family's safety, etc. that ran through my head all night."

Nine out of 10 GAD sufferers polled reported their anxiety significantly interfered with their life, nearly twice that of the general public. The survey also showed:

- Nearly 80 percent of people



**Excessive worry may be a sign of a medical condition called generalized anxiety disorder. Fortunately, treatments are available.**

with GAD worry about making ends meet financially, even when there isn't a problem.

- More than 50 percent of GAD sufferers report their worries impact their job. This is more than twice that of the general public.

- Twice as many people with GAD worry about their health.

- Three out of five GAD sufferers indicated their worry significantly impacts their social life, compared to one-quarter of the general public.

"This survey reinforces that GAD is a devastating condition that encompasses much more than everyday worry and anxiety, and often prevents people from fully enjoying their lives," said Mary Guardino, executive director of Freedom From Fear. "We hope these findings will help people recognize the signs and symptoms of GAD and motivate them to seek professional help."

Sadly, only one-third of GAD sufferers seek treatment. The good news is that effective treatments are available. In fact, the medication Paxil was just approved by the FDA as the first drug in its class to treat GAD. For more information about GAD or to receive a free screening by a mental health professional, call Freedom From Fear's National Anxiety Disorders Screening Project hotline at (888) 442-2022 or visit [www.freedomfromfear.org](http://www.freedomfromfear.org).