Aspirin™: Celebrating more than a century of empowering healthier lives

Inspiring story of acetylsalicylic acid, the active ingredient in Aspirin™, began in 1897 and continues today.

Leverkusen, 2017 – Taken by millions of people daily, Aspirin™, with its active ingredient acetylsalicylic acid (ASA), is recognized by consumers, patients and healthcare professionals as a benchmark product for pain relief and as cornerstone therapy for preventing cardiovascular (CV) events such as a second heart attack or ischemic stroke. Only few medications can boast such a long and diverse history of clinical use and research representing medical advances and innovation. Pain and cardiovascular disease are major global health challenges that adversely impact millions of lives every day. When considering the long history of use and the amount of ongoing research, it is no wonder that ASA, when used as directed, is recognized and trusted as safe and effective.

Indeed, Aspirin is not only showcased in the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History in Washington, DC, USA, alongside medical advances such as the stethoscope, but its active ingredient, ASA, continues to be a part of the World Health Organization’s Essential Drug List.

The rich and continuously evolving story of Aspirin began with a young Bayer chemist’s quest to ease his father’s pain. In 1897, Dr. Felix Hoffmann succeeded in synthesizing a chemically pure and stable form of ASA for the first time. A multi-faceted analgesic was born and legend has it that it was immediately put to good use for the benefit of Hoffmann’s father, who suffered from rheumatism.

Today, ASA, as found in Aspirin, is as relevant as ever, playing a role in modern medical research that is exploring additional uses. In fact, in 2016 alone, ASA was the focus of more than 1,900 publications. Over the years, Bayer, too, has sponsored much research and innovation in the cardiovascular and pain relief areas. Bayer has sponsored and/or
provided drug for a number of major past or ongoing scientific trials, including the Women’s Health Study, the Primary Prevention Project, ARRIVE, ASPREE and ASCEND.

Specific to pain relief, most recently, Bayer introduced, a fast-release Aspirin formulation with micro-active technology that allows the medicine to dissolve more quickly, enter the bloodstream faster, and relieve pain twice as fast as the previous Aspirin formulation.

Consumers and patients should follow label directions, including warnings and indications, when taking ASA short-term for pain relief and longer-term, under a doctor’s direction, for cardioprevention. When ASA is taken as directed, serious gastrointestinal (GI) side effects associated with short-term use are rare, and infrequent with long-term, physician-directed use. Certain conditions, or use of ASA with other pain relievers, may increase risk of serious GI events. Studies show when low-dose ASA is used to prevent a repeat CV event, GI bleeding occurred in less than 1% (41 of 6,300) of patients.

Bayer: Science For A Better Life

Bayer is a global enterprise with core competencies in the Life Science fields of health care and agriculture. Its products and services are designed to benefit people and improve their quality of life. At the same time, the Group aims to create value through innovation, growth and high earning power. Bayer is committed to the principles of sustainable development and to its social and ethical responsibilities as a corporate citizen. In fiscal 2016, the Group employed around 115,200 people and had sales of EUR 46.8 billion. Capital expenditures amounted to EUR 2.6 billion, R&D expenses to EUR 4.7 billion. These figures include those for the high-tech polymers business, which was floated on the stock market as an independent company named Covestro on October 6, 2015. For more information, go to www.bayer.com.

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Forward-Looking Statements

This news release may contain forward-looking statements based on current assumptions and forecasts made by Bayer management. Various known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors could lead to material differences between the actual future results, financial situation, development or performance of the company and the estimates given here. These factors include those discussed in Bayer’s public reports which are available on the Bayer website at www.bayer.com. The company assumes no liability whatsoever to update these forward-looking statements or to conform them to future events or developments.

3 Bayer Archives Leverkusen, BAL 166/3, Pharma, Aspirin/1899-1909
4 Pubmed.gov, search conducted 14 Dec., 2016 for articles with aspirin mentioned in the title or abstract showed more than 1950 citations.
9 ASCEND- “A Study of Cardiovascular Events in Diabetes” (http://rum.ctsu.ox.ac.uk/~ascend/, accessed Jan., 2017)
12 Fries JF, Bruce B. Rates of serious gastrointestinal events from low dose use of acetylsalicylic acid, acetaminophen, and ibuprofen in patients with osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. J Rheumatol 2003; 30:2226-2233