

It's A Pain - A Third Of 16 To 24s Suffer From Back Pain

Contributed by Mintel
Tuesday, 31 July 2012

We may be gearing up for a summer of health and fitness, but new research from Mintel reveals that for many of the nation's youngsters this may be more of a dream than reality as a staggering 34% of 16 to 24 year olds suffer from back pain.

They should be at the prime of their lives, but today, as many as a third of all 16 to 24 year olds suffer from back pain.

And while the number of back pain sufferers is almost equal to the national average of 41%, incidence of back pain amongst 16 to 24 year olds is only slightly behind those aged 65 and over (38%). Back pain peaks in 55 to 64 year olds - one in two (49%) Brits in this age group suffering in this way, while suffering is slightly higher among women (45%) than men (38%).

Michelle Strutton, Head of Household and OTC Healthcare Global Insight at Mintel said:

“The high incidence of back pain in Britain’s youngsters is pretty alarming. Too much time sitting, weakens muscle tone and this can lead to back pain. Many of Britain’s youngsters lead a sedentary lifestyle and lack of sport may well be contributing to back pain as well as poor posture. Britain’s youth are spending hours at a time slumped in front of TV and computer screens, which is doing nothing to strengthen their backs.”

“Back pain is becoming one of society’s main issues and accounts for a high proportion of reasons for taking sick leave. Pain relief medications could offer links to advice websites that offer suggestions about posture, exercises or therapies, showing consumers that they want to take a role in pain prevention as well as relief.” Michelle continues.

But it seems it is not just back pain which is causing a problem for the nation’s young, headaches are also a major source of pain for Britain’s youngsters - pain declining dramatically with age. While as many as 61% of 16-24 year olds suffer from headaches, this declines to just 31% of Brits aged 65 and over. Meanwhile, this younger age group are also most likely to suffer from a cold or flu (74%) compared to an average of 69% of Brits overall, sore throat (66%) versus an average of 54% and finally a cough (60%) versus an average of 53%.

And it is not just Britain’s young who are suffering, it seems the nation’s women are suffering more than their fair share of pain. Women (62%) are far more likely than men (49%) to claim headaches and migraines and bad backs - some 45% of women suffering back pain compared to 38% of men.

“The fact that women are so much more likely than men to suffer from headaches means that they may respond well to remedies that target women specifically, or to marketing themes that feature women as the central target.” Michelle adds.

The research highlights the nation’s top five ailments as 1. a cold and flu (69% of Brits claim this as an ailment), 2. headache (56%), 3. sore throat (54%), 4. cough (53%) and 5. back pain (41%).

Mintel’s research also reveals that despite the pain of the nation increasing, the industry is suffering its fair share of stress. Indeed, over the last five years the incidence of headaches has dramatically increased from 53% in 2007 to 60% in 2011, while the number of Brits suffering from colds and flu has risen from 58% in 2007 to 71% in 2011.

But while incidence of headaches and colds and flu have increased, the number of users of Over-The-Counter (OTC) medicine has fallen. Between 2007 and 2011 the number of users of OTC pain medication fell by 6.8% to 32.2 million, while the number of users of OTC cold and flu remedies fell by 0.7% to around 30 million.

In 2011, consumers spent Â£1,049 million on remedies for pain, colds and flu, down by 2.5% compared with 2010 and spending has barely changed since 2007 when the market was valued at Â£1,038 million. The outlook for the market is for slow growth. The rising numbers within the population as a whole will help to swell the number of adults in the UK and this will help to provide underlying growth. This year the market is expected to reach Â£1,065 million, up 1.5% on 2011.

“There have been two key factors at play for the OTC medicine market. In the difficult economic times since the credit crunch, consumers have begun to behave cautiously, cutting down on unnecessary spending and economising, often by switching to lower-priced alternatives. This competition from the own-labels has created a more cut-throat environment, with brands increasing promotional activity to help increase their market share. But manufacturers will continue to use innovation and powerful marketing campaigns in the battle to grow market share. New formats are likely to be developed, particularly to expand appeal to younger consumers, many of whom are high claimers of ailments, yet their usage levels are below average.” Michelle concludes.

Finally, for those suffering from aches and pain, the top five steps taken by consumers are 1. OTC painkillers (61%) 2.

Prescription painkillers (24%) 3. OTC relieving rubs (17%) 4. OTC heat or ice remedies and a visit to the doctors to make sure it was nothing more serious (both at 16%), 5. doing nothing at all 12%. Meanwhile, the most frequently taken pain killers are 1. Paracetamol (79%), 2. Ibuprofen (72%), 3. Codeine (22%), 4. Aspirin (18%), 5. A combination of Aspirin and Paracetamol (16%).

Source: Mintel Oxygen Reports

About Mintel

Please visit <http://www.mintel.com/> for more information

UK - July 2012