NEWS RELEASE

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**Heart Valve Voice Embarks on Awareness Raising Cycle Ride from London to the EuroPCR Conference in Paris**

LONDON, 18 April 2017 - Team members from UK charity Heart Valve Voice (HVV) will be cycling from London to Paris to help raise awareness of heart valve disease and to remember those who were not treated in time. The group includes HVV Chief Executive Wil Woan, Patient Ambassador Pat Khan and eight clinicians including cardiologists, surgeons and cardiac nurses. The journey will begin at Guys’ & St Thomas’ Hospital in London on 15 May and finish with a ride up to the stage at the EuroPCR Conference in Paris on 17 May.

This cycle ride will involve experts in valve disease from hospitals across England to bring attention to a disease that affects over 1.5 million people over the age of 65 in the UK, according to a 2016 Heart Valve Disease Survey\*. Awareness of this disease is very low in the UK, despite its prevalence, with an average of 94% of people over the age of 60 being unaware of what aortic stenosis (the most common heart valve disease) is. The disease is easily detectable and diagnosis can involve a simple stethoscope exam from a primary care practitioner.

“Many over 65’s mistakenly believe that the symptoms of valve disease such as breathlessness, fatigue and chest pains are merely a result of getting older,” said Wil Woan. “With this cycle ride, we hope to raise awareness of the importance of not ignoring these symptoms and having your heart checked for heart valve disease.”

Along for the ride will be heart valve disease patient and HVV patient ambassador Pat Khan. Having been diagnosed with mitral valve regurgitation in 2006 and receiving a mitral valve repair at the age of 62, she is fit and healthy and ready to take on the challenge of cycling for the HVV team.

“I’m really honoured to be representing my fellow heart valve disease patients on this cycle tour,” says Pat. “If it weren’t for my heart valve surgery and the treatment I received, I wouldn’t be here at all, let alone be participating in a cycle ride to France! I just want to spread the word about how important it is to have yourself checked and to pay my respects to those who didn’t receive the life-saving treatment that I was lucky enough to have in time.”

While there have been many advancements in the treatment of this disease the unfortunate fact is that far too many people are not being diagnosed and treated early enough. It is anticipated that the number of people over the age of 65 with the condition will increase from 1.5 million in 2015 to 3.3 million by 2056, representing a 122% increase according to data obtained as part of the OxVALVE Study. As such, it is important that policy makers and clinicians plan and deliver the necessary provisions to provide the essential health services for the treatment and management of the rapidly increasing numbers of heart valve disease patients.

“We’re coming together for this cycle ride to not only raise awareness of heart valve disease but to also show that there is a need to design a healthcare system that is equipped to better diagnose and treat more people, more effectively.” said Phil McCarthy, Senior HVV Ambassador, King’s College Hospital, London. “Early diagnosis of heart valve disease can actually help to save costs and lessen the burden on the NHS in the longer term by keeping patients out of hospital and living healthy, independent lives.”

“By arriving at the EuroPCR conference after completing this cycle tour we are going to get the attention of clinicians from across the continent and gain their support for our work and the need for better treatment.” said Wil.

The EuroPCR conference will be the perfect venue for HVV and the cycle team to present their plan for improved diagnosis and treatment.The EuroPCR is the annual meeting of the European Association of Percutaneous Cardiovascular Interventions (EAPCI) and a world-leading course in Interventional Cardiovascular Medicine that hosts cardiac experts from all over the globe.

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**About Heart Valve Voice**

Heart Valve Voice is a patient-physician charity for people with heart valve disease. Heart Valve Voice’s mission is to improve the diagnosis, treatment and management of heart valve disease by raising awareness of its severity and the need for timely detection to ensure all patients receive the right treatment at the right time. ‘The more we listen, the more lives we save.’ For more information visit [www.heartvalvevoice.com](http://www.heartvalvevoice.com) and follow us on Twitter @heartvalvevoice and like our Facebook page.

**About Heart Valve Disease**

Heart valve disease is the name given to any malfunction or abnormality of one or more of the heart’s four valves, affecting the blood flow through the heart. The condition is usually caused by wear, disease or damage of the heart valve(s). Commonly reported signs and symptoms of heart valve disease include shortness of breath on exertion, chest tightness and/or pain, palpitations, fatigue, dizziness and fainting.

**About Aortic Stenosis**

Aortic stenosis, a form of heart valve disease, is most often due to age-related degeneration or hardening (calcification) of the aortic valve, leading to progressive narrowing (stenosis) or leakage (regurgitation) – changes which compromise valve function and impair normal blood flow through the heart.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**About EuroPCR**

EuroPCR is the official annual meeting of the European Association of Percutaneous Cardiovascular Interventions (EAPCI) and the world-leading Course in Interventional Cardiovascular Medicine.

Bringing together over 12,000 participants every year, EuroPCR is the flagship event of all PCR educational events by size, but also by offering: it functions as the global forum for sharing within and between all interventional communities.

EuroPCR 2017 will be taking place from 16-19 May 2017.

1. Patient.co.uk. Available at: <http://patient.info/health/aortic-stenosis-leaflet>. Accessed 23 March 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)