BURDEN OF CHRONIC SPONTANEOUS URTICARIA (CSU)

CSU is a serious, chronic and distressing skin condition that is difficult to diagnose and manage.

SYMPTOMS
There is no specific external trigger for CSU, but the autoimmune system may play a role.
- Spontaneously occur
- Chronic (lasting for at least six weeks)
- Red hives (wheals)
- Itch
- Deep tissue swelling (angioedema)

COMPLICATIONS
- Sleep deprivation
- Lack of energy
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Social isolation
- Emotional upset

PREVALENCE
At any given time, 0.5-1% of the global population is affected by CSU. Women are more likely than men to be diagnosed.

DURATION
People with CSU who experience deep tissue swelling (angioedema) may have a greater chance of CSU lasting for >12 months or longer.

The disease generally lasts 1-5 years but can last for decades.

TREATMENT
Antihistamines are the current mainstay of treatment, but more than 50% of people with CSU on approved antihistamine doses do not achieve symptom relief.

Symptoms remain uncontrolled even in many people with CSU receiving up to four times the approved antihistamine dose.

References:
1. Primary Care Dermatology Society website. [Available at: http://www.pcos.org.uk/local-guidelines/urticaria/spontaneous-urticaria-agency-advisory-article] [Last accessed: August 2013]