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**World Endometriosis Research Foundation funds
international multi-centre study to develop
a tool to identify women with endometriosis**

LONDON – The World Endometriosis Research Foundation (WERF) has secured funding for its first international multi-centre study. The aim of the study is to develop a symptom-based questionnaire to predict the presence of endometriosis – **a study of this scale has never been undertaken before.**

Endometriosis affects tens of millions of women across the globe. It is a major cause of pelvic pain and infertility in women. Yet, the disease is poorly understood, most treatments have unpleasant side effects, and there is no cure.

Lead investigator and World Endometriosis Research Foundation trustee, Mr Stephen Kennedy, Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Oxford University, says: “The World Endometriosis Research Foundation recognises that **one of the most pressing issues in endometriosis is the delay between symptom onset and a surgical diagnosis. In some health care settings this extends to 11 years**”.

“To be able to treat endometriosis properly, we need to recognise and understand the symptoms of the disease better and earlier”, says Mr Kennedy.

The aim of this study is to develop and then validate a symptom-based questionnaire, which reliably and accurately predicts whether a woman has endometriosis or not. “A tool, which can help provide an early diagnosis resulting in women receiving the appropriate treatment sooner, may prevent unnecessary pain for millions of women worldwide”, predicts Mr Kennedy.

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"The current delay in diagnosis and treatment contributes to years of suffering and potential infertility if the disease is left untreated", says Mr Kennedy. "Although there is no cure for endometriosis at present, delaying treatment because symptoms are not recognised or acknowledged is simply not acceptable".

This study has been made possible by research funding from TAP Pharmaceutical Products Inc. The study will be overseen by the World Endometriosis Research Foundation, which has assembled a unique consortium of researchers around the world to conduct this study, some of whom form part of a World Health Organisation (WHO) Network in Reproductive Health. The study will be designed and coordinated by the University of Oxford in collaboration with TAP Pharmaceutical Products Inc.

Early results are expected to be announced during the 2nd quarter of 2009.

Notes to editors:

1. **Endometriosis** is a condition in which tissue, similar to the lining inside the uterus, is found elsewhere in the body, mainly in the abdominal cavity. The tissue responds to the woman's hormonal cycle. This abnormal tissue can give rise to nodules, lesions, cysts in the ovaries, and adhesions, resulting in inflammation, pain and infertility. The consequence of these effects has a major impact on quality of life. Endometriosis affects tens of millions of women across the globe, yet the origin of the disease is poorly understood, most treatments have side effects, and there is no cure.

For more information: www.endometriosisfoundation.org/endometriosis.php

2. **The World Endometriosis Research Foundation** was created in 2006 as a joint initiative between the World Endometriosis Society (WES), the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) and the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE). It is the first global charitable organisation with an aim to foster research into endometriosis to improve overall knowledge about the disease and its treatment. The Foundation provides a platform to attract sufficient funding from a variety of sources to:
 - a. Facilitate and carry out well powered, international multi-centre trials
 - b. Support specific research projects investigating disease mechanisms.

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