

## **Indian Women's Health Report 2021 reveals biases, stigmas and mis-perceptions women face in white-collar jobs due to health issues across India**

- 'The Indian Women's Health Report 2021' a study by Emcure Pharmaceuticals that surveyed working women of 25 to 55 years in white-collar jobs across 7 cities (Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune) reveals prevalent societal stigma prevents most women from talking about their health-related issues
- 86% of the working women have observed their colleagues/relatives/friends drop out of the workforce, 59% of whom cited health issues as the main reason.
- 80% of the working women felt that their male colleagues lacked sensitivity when it came to women health related concerns
- 67% working women say that talking about health issues is still considered to be a taboo in the society

**Pune, September 7<sup>th</sup> 2021:** The Indian Women's Health Report 2021 surveying 1000 working women aged between 25 to 55 years across seven cities has revealed that around half of the women surveyed are not comfortable talking about one or more women's health issues due to the prevalent societal taboo and stigmas associated with them.

The study has been conducted by Emcure Pharmaceuticals in association with Ipsos Research Private Limited (Ipsos India) with an objective to gain insights on the social, cultural and medical outlook for working women and eventually find solutions involving various stakeholders.

Through this survey, women working in white-collar jobs shared details of stigmas they face related to health, and how it all leads to social pressures and professional issues.

### **Key findings**

- 90% working women face a conflict of interest while balancing familial/ personal and professional obligations
- 86% working women have observed their colleagues/relatives/friends drop out of the workforce, 59% of whom cited health issues as the main reason
- 84% working women have faced stereotypes/ judgements around periods such as being told not to go near sacred spaces such as places of worship or kitchen or even being told to hide their sanitary napkins
- 66% working women think society considers women suffering from endometriosis as unsuitable for marriage
- 67% working women say that talking about health issues is still considered to be a taboo in the society

*The findings highlight that commonly occurring issues such as PCOS, breast cancer and endometriosis are still subject to taboo and stereotypes. This reflects the current state of women's health in India in a poor light.*

**Ms. Namita Thapar, Executive Director, Emcure Pharmaceuticals,** says, "When we launched our YouTube talk show, Uncondition Yourself this January around women's health, we realised that getting women to come on the show and talk about their health was a big

challenge. This prompted us to conduct a study and ramp up our initiatives around awareness and diagnosis. Despite the progress we have made in the corporate sector for involving women in the workforce, issues related to women's health are still associated with irrational taboos. The findings of our study reveal the persistence of mis-perceptions and illogical societal taboos related to women's health issues affecting even India's white collar women across sectors."

"The study indicates that besides the health issues, there are multiple professional and societal stereotypes women are exposed to, which can lead to stigmatization, affecting their professional performance." **Ms. Thapar** said, adding, "Ignorance, unawareness and lack of acceptance will only make these issues more difficult to diagnose and resolve. As a responsible society, it is imperative to make these issues acceptable and mainstream. Women have strong voices and they must speak up more often about these important issues."

The study has found that even though nearly half the working women surveyed are either diagnosed with or know someone else diagnosed with issues such as infertility, breast cancer and PCOS, they are still hesitant to discuss these health issues.

75% of the working women said that their employers were taking initiatives to help address health issues, the study also found that over 80% of them felt that their male colleagues lacked sensitivity when it came to women health related concerns.

Moreover, 52% of working women find it difficult to manage health with work. Amongst various sectors, the number was highest at 67% for the women working in retail sector.

**For Emcure Pharmaceuticals' study on the social, cultural and medical outlook for working women**, Ipsos India collected the information about the health issues working women face and stigmas associated with it in the society and corporate world. The figures quoted in this article are as per the data collected by Ipsos India through online survey among 1000 working women in white collar roles, in the age group of 25-55 years based on a structured questionnaire designed in collaboration with Emcure.

#### **About Emcure Pharmaceuticals Ltd.:**

*Emcure Pharmaceuticals Ltd. (EPL) is one of India's leading pharmaceutical players headquartered in Pune with global footprint. Driven by technology and innovation, the company's mission has been to develop and deliver Effective Medicines to Cure patients, enabling them to lead healthier lives. Established in 1981, the firm was founded by Mr. Satish Mehta who spotted an opportunity in contract manufacturing pharmaceuticals for MNCs. Emcure is ranked as the 12th largest pharma company in India (AIOCD-AWACS MAT Mar 21). It is a leader in gynaecology, blood-related and HIV antiviral therapy areas. It is also developing India's first mRNA vaccine for the novel coronavirus using its in-house developed mRNA platform.*

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