

For Immediate Release

Six-market Asian Health Survey shows:

HONG KONG PEOPLE PLACE LOWEST VALUE ON HEALTH
Respondents rank sleeping and shopping over exercises for
stress relief

Hong Kong, 22nd July 2001 – A multi-country Asian health survey has revealed that Hong Kong people place the lowest value on health as an integral part of their well-being. And while Hong Kong respondents said they are experiencing more stress than ever before, they are managing stress by resorting to shopping, sleeping and watching TV rather than sports & exercise.

Sponsored by Cerebos Pacific Limited, the leading food & health supplements manufacturer whose flagship product is BRAND'S Essence of Chicken, the Asian Health Survey 2001 covered Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

The survey identified five attitudinal segments with different values and beliefs towards health – holistic believers, partial converts, passive embracers, carefrees, and unbelievers.

Hong Kong scored the highest proportion of “unbelievers” (39%) in the survey, which is about double of those in Taiwan and Singapore, where “unbelievers” accounted for only 18% and 20% respectively. And Hong Kong’s alarming short-term perspective on the value of health was underlined by the fact that the majority of respondents (72%) were either “unbelievers” or “carefrees”.

Hong Kong did no better when it came to stress management, a major focus of the BRAND'S Essence of Chicken Asian Health Survey. More than 40% of Hong Kong respondents said they suffered more stress than ever before, with 58% of men attributing this to work and women identifying family problems as the main cause.

Yet Hong Kong people favoured instantaneous methods for dealing with stress – with shopping (17%), sleeping (13%) and watching TV (12%) ranked high. These efforts while relaxing in the short-term are not sustaining in the long run especially when stress levels are high and professional guidance and aid need to be sought.

Professor Thomas Wong, Head of Department, Department of Nursing and Health Sciences at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, who was the research advisor of the study is concerned of the survey's findings. He said that the short-term perspective Hong Kong people have on health is alarming, especially given that the society is ageing.

"We would warn against the possible adverse health consequences of prolonged high levels of stress," said Professor Wong. "Though there is no causal relationship between stress levels and health problems, people who are constantly enduring higher stress levels have more hyperthyroidism, anaemia, gastric ulcers and high blood pressure. We recommend the public to exercise more and maintain a balanced diet to strengthen their immune system. Using other complementary therapy like taking dietary supplements may also be an effective means for coping with extra levels of stress."

Cerebos Pacific Limited is the first Asian health supplement and food manufacturer to sponsor a health survey for the region. The survey is part of the Company's new millennium vision and goal to help Asian consumers better protect their health for the longer term.

Mr Eiji Koike, President and CEO of Cerebos Pacific Limited said, “This survey shows awareness of health issues by respondents in the six markets but there is a distinct lack of self-discipline and self-investment in long-term preventive healthcare management within their daily lifestyle.”

“In Hong Kong, and elsewhere in the region, there is clearly potential for local health authorities and multinational corporations such as Cerebos to join forces. Together, we can encourage families and individuals to actively manage their personal stress levels and lifestyle choices on a long-term basis.”

Professor Wong added that while occasional stress can have a beneficial overall effect, chronic stress levels affect the proper functions of the human immune system, heart, memory and may even cause mood swings and other associated problems.

“Health promotion and protection have become a major part of the health care agenda. And with escalating hospitalization costs, more patients are being cared for in the community. But the public should be much more aware that stress requires management and the best strategy is to maintain a balanced diet, exercise, ample rest and cultivation of an overall positive attitude, taking complementary therapy such as dietary supplement may also help.”

In response to the survey findings, Cerebos Hong Kong is establishing the BRAND’S Health Education Fund to support secondary school projects that promote the awareness of long-term health maintenance. “Through these projects we hope to encourage people to take charge of both their mental and physical health by practising proper health maintenance and protection. We emphasize that long-term health requires a holistic approach involving a healthy mind, body and environment,” Mr Koike said.

Details of the Asian Health Survey and BRAND'S Health Education Fund can be found at the BRAND'S web site, click on www.brandsworld.com/hongkong

ABOUT CEREBOS

Cerebos Pacific Limited is a leading food & health supplements company in the Asia Pacific and has its corporate headquarters in Singapore. It is listed on the Singapore Exchange Securities Limited, providing management services to subsidiary and associate companies in the Asia Pacific. Its flagship product, BRAND'S Essence of Chicken is the category leader in all its major markets, including Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and China. BRAND'S Essence of Chicken has a long heritage of over 165 years.

NOTE TO EDITORS

The Asian Health Survey 2001 was sponsored by Cerebos Pacific Limited and conducted by market research firm Asia Market Intelligence Limited (AMI). The Department of Nursing and Health Sciences in The Hong Kong Polytechnic University helped in assessing the validity of the method and the analysis of results. It involved more than 6,000 face-to-face interviews in six markets with respondents aged between 15 and 60. In addition to Hong Kong and Singapore, cities covered were as follows: three in China (Shanghai, Guangzhou, Beijing); three in Taiwan (Taipei, Kaoshiung and Taizhong); five in Thailand (Bangkok, Chiangmai, Chouhburi, Songhkla and Korat); five in Malaysia (Johore Baru, Kota Baru, Ipoh, Shah Alam and Georgetown).