



Newsletter February 2010

contact: Helen Cotter
ph: 6281 2988
cotterhe@hotmail.com

Next meeting: Thursday 11 February 10.30am

The Weston Club,

1 Liardet St

Weston

speaker: Peter Dinn from Tosca and Dinn Funerals

The January Meeting

The first meeting of the year, held on 14 January, was well attended by members, many of whom were catching up with people they hadn't seen since the Christmas lunch. Most of the meeting was spent in organising the next few months. We agreed to have some meetings with speakers and some without and discussed what we'd like to hear about. Ebba agreed to organise the speakers for appropriate meetings. The first speaker you can see above.

We are also continuing with Dianne Proctor's work on the issue of woodsmoke – especially in the Tuggeranong Valley. Chris, Pat and Robyn are following that up.

Esther agreed to look into organising a 'business' card containing the Lung Life Support Group information, a card that we can hand out at appropriate times.

Laurelle and Esther are organising the Lung Life table for the Seniors Week Expo in late March. More details on that later as they will be needing volunteers to help staff the table during the day.

It was a very productive meeting and many of us followed it with a lovely lunch.



This year 2010 is the Year of the Lung. It aims to raise awareness about the importance of lung health and its prevention and treatment. Hundreds of millions of people struggle each year for life and breath due to lung disease and yet the devastating impact of lung disease is still not recognized. Lung disease is a growing health issue in Australia with **2.6 million** cases reported in 2007/2008. It's more common in any year than most common types of cancer, road traffic accidents, heart disease or diabetes. By 2050, this figure is expected to more than double to **4.5 million** Australians.

Approximately **2.1 million** Australians have some form of COPD and more than **9,100** Australians are diagnosed with lung cancer each year. More women die of lung cancer than breast cancer and the number of new lung cancer cases for women and men is increasing dramatically. Asthma is also a big issue with more than **2 million** Australians reported having asthma during 2007/2008. This is relatively high by international standards.

In Canberra, it is estimated that up to **30 000** people live with lung disease although many may not realise it through misdiagnosis or complacency.

Each year, lung disease causes nearly 350,000 hospitalisations in Australia and lung cancer remains the third leading cause of death since 1998. COPD is also a leading cause of death and disease burden after heart disease, stroke and cancer.

As well as the personal and social burden, the economic burden of lung disease in Australia is high. COPD is more costly overall per case than cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis or arthritis. In 2008, the total economic impact of COPD is estimated to be **\$98.2 billion** of which \$8.8 billion is attributed to financial costs and \$89.4 billion to the loss of wellbeing. The total annual health expenditure on lung cancer is estimated to be **\$136 million** by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

It's hoped that the Year of the Lung will help raise awareness of these issues and will result in improved prevention and treatment of chronic lung disease.

For more information, see www.lungfoundation.com.au

Or visit the 2010: The Year of the Lung Web site: <http://www.yearofthelung.org/>

Let them know your views

The Commonwealth Government's website continues to accept people's stories. The site encourages consumers to share our health experience, offer suggestions for future improvements, tell them about the health system we'd like to see. These views will be compiled and reported to Government prior to deciding what health reform should be undertaken.

<http://www.yourhealth.gov.au/internet/yourhealth/publishing.nsf/Content/Tell+us+your+health+story>

Educating the Professionals by Laurelle Ellis

I'm the contact person for organising members of the Lung Life Support Group do their bit to help educate future physiotherapists about chronic lung disease. Wendy Chesworth from the Physio Dept at UC has called on us twice a year, in May and August, since 2007. The first request was to video some of our members when not suffering from an infection and really gasping. Dianne Proctor and David Bromhead were the video stars. Apparently some students were extremely distressed the first time they met a patient suffering an exacerbation.

The physio course is a two year post graduate course running from July to June. The students we see in August are very new physio students. Quite a few have come from the personal trainer area - though we have met school teachers, an army officer and an engineer in the past. The students are interested in learning about medical history, current medications, lifestyle changes and exercise undertaken. They were keen to listen to 'bung lungs' as opposed to their own healthy lungs; and to carry out a spirometry tests

When we see them in the following May, they are almost half way through the course and so are much more experienced. They have been on the wards at the hospital and are more familiar with what COPD patients can manage exercise-wise. They don't exactly draw up an exercise regime for individuals but more try out what they have learned and seen during practical sessions. They have lots of ideas and advice.

Lung Life members have also been called upon by the ANU Medical School. They needed COPD sufferers for a tutorial on respiratory problems. They have also needed patients for exam purposes. Here it is important not to assist the examinee in any way – they have to work out what is wrong with you.

Once again it's helping ourselves in a very positive way – helping to train the next round of professionals and letting them know what COPD patients really need and how they can be best helped. We have some level of frustration about the lack of knowledge of some in the medical profession about the implications and practicalities of chronic lung disease. We do our bit to raise awareness and hope to continue. There cannot be

too many volunteers for such sessions as it means the groups can be smaller and students gain more benefit.

Chronic conditions and depression (Health Voices, Issue 5, Oct, 2009)

This article in **Health Voices** looks at the issue of depression and anxiety which many people with chronic illnesses suffer from. This has implications for the way they manage their condition, yet it's often not being picked up. We should expect someone with a serious condition to show many of the signs of depression – irritability and frustration, difficulty sleeping, fatigue, pain and slowing down of thought and actions are some of the signs. It should be an automatic step in the treatment of all chronic conditions to have screening and proper assessment to identify depression.

Depression can cause a loss of motivation; day-to-day tasks become a struggle; quality use of medicines and their proper use is often compromised; substance and alcohol abuse can result.

Chronic conditions often require great changes to life style and this can affect self-image. People who need to make lifestyle changes such as diet or exercise can be met with harsh criticism from outsiders when they are seen as not following the doctor's advice - this can increase the depression or anxiety.

If or when it's recognised, depression or anxiety can be treated appropriately. Medication can be prescribed but with anxiety, communication is a better medicine, with doctors including reassurance and explanation in their dealings with their patient.

The significant human, social and financial cost of depression and anxiety connected with chronic conditions means that we must get better at assessing it.

A fact sheet 'Chronic physical illness and depression' is available from www.beyondblue.org.au.
Information about the CHF Chronic Conditions Self Management Project is available at www.chf.org.au.

Christmas Lunch December 2009



Christmas Lunch Revellers



Julie, the Christmas Elf



Pat, Judy and Reuben are waiting. But whose hands are they? And who is in the background?



Happy revellers: Jeanette and Lorna



Val contemplating



Daphne and Tommy enjoying themselves

Snippets:

The ACT library system has recently added a new resource: **Consumer Health Complete**. This resource aims to give you reliable health information.

The library also has **free on-line computer tutorials** for members of the library. If you have a library card and password, it could be a good way to check or upgrade your computer skills from home.

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