



May 2024 Newsletter

Our mission is to provide a supportive and informative environment for people with lung conditions and their carers.

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NEXT MEETING: Thursday 13 June 2024
10:15 am – 12:00 noon
Weston Creek Labor Club
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

Sonia Antiloff and friends, Classical singers, will entertain us as well as showing their breathing techniques and training as singers

From the Editor:

This month I'm editing the newsletter and next month it'll be back to Geoff. If you have any items of interest, including photos, please let us know. You can send them to the Lung Life email address (above), subject heading **newsletter**, and Marina will forward them to either Geoff or me. We look forward to some interesting items.

Dates to Remember

Friday May 31: Lunch at the Burns Club
Thursday 13 June: Speaker – singer Sonia Antiloff and friends
Friday 28 June: Lunch at the Mawson Club
Thursday 11 July – discussion meeting
Friday 26 July - lunch TBA

May meeting – Helen Cotter

Marina opened the meeting with about 15 members present. We talked about the following:

- **Volunteer for editing the newsletter:** We know that Geoff is going to edit the newsletter every second month and Helen Cotter is happy to fill in when necessary. But we are looking for a volunteer to regularly take over doing the newsletter every second month. Helen will work with the volunteer to show them how she does it. Please let Marina know if you'd like to do it – or to have a trial run.

- Val Dempsey brought along her **award medals** to show us. Val has been working with the St John's Ambulance service for many years, now looking after the ACT and generally on the weekend, working the phones for the service. She also spends time working with groups educating them on First Aid (see item below).
- Terry Hunt has various oxygen concentrators for sale. See item below.
- **Lunch on Friday 31 May is at the Burns Club.**
- Val Dempsey, as part of the Lung Life Publicity Group, has been investigating the services of **SHOUT** (Self Help Organisations United Together).

And then it was over to our **speaker, Raj Puthenveedu, COPD Nurse, CHS**



At the end of the session, Raj showed us how to use the various inhalers. Hold your head up – not down as this constricts the airways.

With this inhaler, shake the inhaler, seal your lips around the mouthpiece of the spacer, start to breathe in, then press the inhaler. Hold your breath for 5 seconds or more (if you can). Raj is showing us this by raising his fingers, one at a time.

Raj explained how his role as the COPD Nurse at Canberra Hospital Service was with both inpatients and outpatients. He shows people how to take their inhalers. He talks to people about using their inhalers – often having to correct slightly the way they use them. He also assists people to get any further help they need. Raj mentioned that quite a few people miss their outpatient's appointment, often not realizing how a specialist nurse can help them.

What's important in COPD management?

- Raj outlined the importance of:
- Regular use of inhalers.
- No smoking.
- High energy protein diet and maintaining appropriate weight.
- Exercising.
- Vaccinations and prevention of respiratory infection.

After each infection, you probably don't return to your previous level. Often the infections take longer to recover from.

- Sensitivity to change in your symptoms.
- Having a COPD action plan to follow when your symptoms change.

Did you know?

People with COPD are 25% more at risk of cardio-vascular events than the general public. And they have a higher rate of hypertension (high blood pressure). Hypertension is common because COPD's chronic inflammation leads to a dysfunction that causes contraction of the blood vessels – which leads to hypertension.

Raj then talked about the importance of nitrous oxide to breathing – and to general body function. Because of this, it is important to eat foods that are high in nitrates which are converted into nitrous oxide. These foods include most vegetables but especially the dark leafy green ones. Darkly coloured fruit, red wine, grapes and even a piece of dark chocolate are also good. Unfortunately the nitrates are destroyed in cooking – so salads are best.

Raj pointed out that the bacteria in the mouth are important in assisting the nitrates in the food be converted into nitrites that can be used by the body. He told us it wasn't too good to use mouth wash as it got rid of the bacteria that did the job.

One food he mentioned that is looking to be very beneficial is **beetroot**. Some studies are showing a reduction in blood pressure and improved breathing.

As well as eating good food, it's important to do cardio and strengthening exercise; to breathe through your nose, to maintain friendly bacteria on your skin and do relaxation exercises.

What is COPD? Raj explained that it is an umbrella term for the conditions of chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and chronic asthma. Bronchiectasis is not included in COPD although many of the symptoms are the same. Nor is IPF or any of the other common conditions with similar symptoms. Pneumonia is inflammation of the lungs which is caused by a viral, bacterial or fungal infection.

Once the condition is contracted – including those like asbestosis – the aim is to control or slow down the condition. The best way is to have a healthy lifestyle, eating well and exercising the best you can.

Question re vaping? Raj explained that many of the vapes contain a variety of forms of nicotine so are addictive. Also in the vapes are many dangerous chemicals which may have the same ingredients as in nail polish and insecticide. These will have an impact on the lung health of the individual – and also have an impact on public health the way smoking has done.

Finally, Raj had brought along a variety of **inhalers** used by those with chronic lung conditions and he demonstrated very clearly how to use them. It was a very interesting and most worthwhile talk.



Joe Marks, Helen Cotter, Jacqui Cole, Janette Morgan (partially hidden) and George Watts



Les and Sandra Hudson, Val Dempsey listening to Raj talking to Chris Gray

Oxygen machines available for sale

Terry has 3 oxygen machines that he'd like to pass on to people who can use them. All three have been recently serviced; and all three have their appropriate attachments.

- A small portable **AirSep** – the sort you can carry over your shoulder;
- An Inogen 3 – also a carry machine
- A Philips SimplyGo – this is the big stationary concentrator. It could be useful if you need a second concentrator to make life easier in your house.

To get more details or to buy, contact Terry on **ph: 0411 220 624**.

Retirement of Dr Mark Hurwitz



Late last year, patients of respiratory specialist Dr Mark Hurwitz said goodbye to him and wished him well in his retirement. He was a much-loved doctor with a lovely compassionate manner, always up to date with the latest treatments.

Support for Lung Life

Mark was very supportive of Lung Life right from the beginning in 1998 when it was being set up. We received a \$200 donation from **Boehringer Ingelheim**, thanks to his speaking to them about the group. This enabled the group to meet wider publicity about its existence.

Later, he often **talked to us at our meetings**, giving us the latest respiratory health news, and very ably answering the minefield of our questions about our health and our treatments. These meetings were always well attended.

When Lung Foundation Australia (LFA) began their **annual Education Day Seminars at Southern Cross Club, Woden** to a wider audience of about 60 people, Dr Hurwitz spoke at a few of them, often giving complex information in a very understandable way.

Dr Hurwitz was highly regarded by his patients and all of us at Lung Life. We will remember him as a very kind and competent person with a caring and friendly approach. We wish him well in his retirement.
Helen Cotter

Val Dempsey's Award



This is the award from **The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem**. Val has been made a Dame of Grace, an order of chivalry and dignity Honor. She has no title but now has a nominal of **Valmai Dempsey DStJ**.

This award is bestowed upon people who have been nominated through the **Order of Saint John** for work of a dignified and continued occurrence or a celebration of their ongoing good deeds. Her citation reads that she had contributed over 270 speaking engagements in public and guest appearances in the previous 18 months.

It is a sovereign order and has been granted through King Charles the Third. Val feels very honoured to be acknowledged in this way.

Know where to go for your health care from HCCA 24 April 2024

Canberra Health Services has launched a new online tool to help consumers find the right health service in their community. HCCA members and staff provided significant feedback during development of the tool and campaign. Stay tuned for more in the coming weeks.

Visit the [Know Where to Go](#) page on the Canberra Health Services website.

Heart Disease Myths You Should Do Away With

Featured Article by Dr. Ryan Shelton, N.M.D. from Chris Moyle

Dr Shelton is a director of Zenith Labs (USA), creating natural treatments for complementary medicine.

Of all the myths going around about illness and health issues, heart disease myths have caught a fairly large scale of my attention. Why am I so concerned? The heart is the body's central organ, and any damage to it can be synonymous with death. It would only be a matter of time. So I'll debunk these myths because they are most detrimental to older adults more prone to heart-related diseases.

Myth 1 — Go Easy If You Have a Heart Condition

Unfortunately, slacking off doesn't alleviate the symptoms of any heart condition. A sedentary lifestyle could further aggravate blood clots in your lower body. The heart is also made up of muscles, like your biceps. You strengthen it when you incorporate more movement into your daily routine.

Low-impact exercises will help improve blood flow around your body, improving overall health. But this isn't me asking you to do 2 hours of intense workout at the gym as a cure to a heart condition. Instead, speak to your caregiver or physician. They should be able to recommend cardio and strength training exercises that are right for you and your heart.

Myth 2— Discontinuing Smoking Doesn't Change Anything

Smoking is bad, not only for your lungs alone but your heart as well. The chemicals in cigarettes damage the heart and blood vessels. And the more you smoke, the more damage your circulatory system receives. However, once you stop smoking, even if you're almost 80, you lower your risk of heart disease by a significant portion. If you stay clean for up to a decade, your heart will be as great as someone who never touched a cigarette.

Myth 3 — You Should Never Eat Fat If You Have a Heart Condition

Trans fat and saturated fats? Yes. Because they cause cholesterol to accumulate in your arteries, increasing your risk of a heart attack. However, healthy fats like omega-3 fatty acids found in salmon, nuts, cod liver oil, and tuna help improve heart and overall body functions and should make up a significant portion of your meals.

Myth 4 — High Blood Pressure Comes With Old Age

The older you get, the stiffer the walls of your blood vessels become, and the harder your heart needs to work to get blood across your entire body. This whole process is what increases blood pressure with age. But this does not mean it's okay always to have your blood pressure above normal which is 130/80 mm Hg. There are steps you can take to counter the effects of aging on your blood pressure and consequently cut down your risks of suffering a heart attack.

A visit to the UC Physio students

Helen Reynolds

On the two days that I went to be a 'guinea pig' to the UC Physio students, there was only one other 'guinea pig' and me so we had about 5 or 6 physios each. The time was quite organised with very little time for informal chat - such a pity as the Physios came from all different countries such as Japan, Myanmar, Nepal, and the Philippines.

They asked questions about our health and we did the dreaded 6 minute walk. On the second visit, they went through a check list of health conditions – some of which I hadn't heard of – and we did another 6 minute walk. I would have loved to have had more chat about our conditions as I think it would be beneficial to them - maybe next time.

April Lunch

For a whole range of reasons many of our regular lunch goers were not able to make it, to our April lunch at the Raiders Club in Weston, leaving a small but intimate group of 7 members to chat and socialise. Those that attended reported how the smaller group had made it easier to engage all members at the table. Conversation flowed freely across a range of topics and it was a fabulous way of getting to know some of our newer members better.

Marina



Happy diners after the meeting

A Tip for Being Happy: Develop Positive Thinking

Develop a habit of seeing the good side of situations. Things will go wrong, but you don't have to make yourself miserable when they do. Monitor your thinking. If you catch yourself with a negative thought, stop and change it into a positive thought.

Ref: Sarah Edelman, Psychologist