



## Newsletter October 2010

contact: Helen Cotter ph: 6281 2988  
[lung.life@hotmail.com](mailto:lung.life@hotmail.com)

### Next Meeting

Thursday 14 October

10.30am - noon

The Weston Club,  
1 Liardet St  
Weston

*two events at this meeting:*

*Come with health/medication/etc queries and tips to talk about at the meeting. Old hands can pass on their experiences.*

**AND**

*Come and talk about your interests/activities/hobbies – the things you do when you are not at this meeting.*

*Bring along some handouts or samples to show us.*

Don't forget that this day is **World Spirometry Day** with testing occurring at Woden Mall during the day.

### September Meeting by Chris Moyle

**Jan Ironside**, CNC and co-ordinator, and **Chris Hyland**, COPD CNC nurse specialist, from the Chronic Care Program at Canberra Hospital spoke recently at our September meeting. The Chronic Care Program was set up 3 years ago to support ACT residents with COPD and/or Chronic heart failure (CHF). It aims to improve communication between patients and all relevant health care and community service providers with the idea of helping people to self manage and then 'discharging' them from the program.

People are eligible for the Program after more than 2 (for heart) or 3 (for COPD) emergency presentations per annum or more than 2 or 3 admissions in the last 2 years. Education and clinical support are provided to clients and their support networks – ie carers/family – with patient self-management encouraged. Care co-ordinators guide access to community services for help with diet, exercise and medications, plus shoppings and

outings to social groups. They provide face to face contact, phone calls and home visits and assist a patient entering hospital. Patients are on the program for usually about a year.

The Program also assists with the following:

**Respecting Patient Choices Program:** to help patients formulate their wishes for future treatment.

Consultants can help draft an **Advance Care Plan** and assist with appointment of an **Enduring Power of Attorney**. Respecting Patient Choices consultants can be contacted on 6244 3344.

A **COPD Action Plan** helps minimise hospital visits. The Plan helps people identify any changes in symptoms and initiate early treatment – including early use of prednisone and antibiotics - to hopefully avoid the downward spiral that ends in hospital admission. If a patient is admitted to hospital, Chris Hyland will advise the patient's GP what is happening and make sure the patient understands their medication and oxygen therapy, even going home with the patient to set up home oxygen. She emphasises the importance of being up-to-date with flu and pneumovax vaccinations.

**Exercise** is encouraged and Canberra Hospital offers a **Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program** which provides all information in a package to give that extra support. A respiratory specialist's referral is required for entry to this program. A **Quit Smoking Program** is available as smoking cessation halts or slows down COPD.

**Nutrition** is important with referrals to dieticians available. Excess weight lessens the amount of room the lungs have to breathe; and underweight patients are assisted to gain some kilos. **Physiotherapists** can help with strengthening the muscles and assist with bowel and bladder care.

It was a most helpful and informative session from Jan and Chris and we thank them very much. To contact the Chronic Care Team, phone: 6244 2273.

## **Vale Ken Peddey, Marj Taylor, Sue Gane**

We are saddened at the loss of Ken, Marj and Sue. Ken and Marj were long term members of our group, two of the original members. Sue and her partner of Dave Bromhead have been much loved members for many years. Our thoughts and condolences go out to their families.

## **National Self Help Day Expo** Weston Creek, Wednesday 8 September

As the name says, this was a national event – in other parts of Australia, self help groups were also showing their wares, as we did at Weston. Support groups such as Bosom Buddies, Heart Support Australia, Better Hearing, pain, HCCA, prostate, ADHD and others were there. Margaret Reid opened the Expo; and it was good to see quite a few people from the health industry walking around.



*Laurelle at our site*

Many thanks to Laurelle, Caroline and Barry for setting up and

manning our site; and to Pam and Chris for additional help later. It seemed a very successful Expo, well organised and well run by SHOUT.



For more information, see [www.lungfoundation.com.au](http://www.lungfoundation.com.au)

More information on European *Year of the Lung* activities, see: <http://www.ersnet.org/yearofthelung>  
More information on worldwide *Year of the Lung* activities, see: [www.2010yearofthelung.org](http://www.2010yearofthelung.org)

## National Lung Cancer Tree Planting Day 29 August 2010

A sunny day. A bare hillside. Greening Australia ready with plants, buckets, mattocks, gloves, water. About 50 people spread around the hill, singly or in twos and threes, planting the native trees into holes already dug.



*Caroline doing her bit*

That's the scene that Caroline and Helen found when they arrived to help commemorate National Lung Cancer Day by planting trees. Almost 760 trees were planted by the participants - who consisted of volunteers, people from Greening Australia as well as Parks, Conservation & Lands people and people connected with lung cancer.



*Helen does her bit*

John Stanhope opened the event half way through and unveiled a plaque. The Australian Lung

Foundation were represented by Glenda Colburn, who organised the event, and Dr Bob Edwards, Chairman of ALF from Brisbane.

It was a successful event, having been part of an Australian wide planting to commemorate the 7600 people who die from lung cancer in Australia every year, lung cancer being the leading cause of cancer related deaths in Australia.



*The commemorative stone does its bit*

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## **Physio and Medico sessions** by Janice Watkins

***About 8 – 10 members of Lung Life, along with some others, recently attended sessions as 'patients' with trainee Physio students and with trainee medicos. We feel these are really worthwhile events as they will increase the students' awareness of the effects of chronic disease – and will have long term benefits when they work with such people.***

***Thanks to Clive, Val, the two Robyns, Pam, Judy. Janice, Noel, Caroline as well as Brian and Rhonda. Apologies if I have missed anyone.***

***Janice writes:***

I saw a group of about 8 Physio students and then later another 6 or so. They were well prepared with questions and observations and had practised on each other beforehand. They did spirometry testing. They seemed confident and asked questions about medical history, symptoms and lifestyle. They took more than an hour over their session(s).

The med students were also prepared with questions. I think there were 10 or 12 of them plus their tutor. They did the physical examination but no spirometry test.

Both groups were practising how to approach a patient and be reassuring, or neutral, and get essential information.

I fear that what they most learned from me was my dissatisfactions with the medical profession, or perhaps it is the limitations of medical science when it comes to helping and advising people in my situation.

Both groups were equipped with shiny new stethoscopes in nice colours.

## **Ginseng Reviewed** by Mark Hurwitz

The article by Gross et al in last month's newsletter is very interesting in that it did reveal a possible benefit of Ginseng for people with moderately severe COPD.

There study involved 92 adults in which 49 received the Ginseng and 43 placebo. Those who received the drug did appear to show an improvement some measurements of lung function, muscle strength and uptake of oxygen which is clearly very interesting. Of note is the dose used (100mg twice daily) and that the study was only for 3 months.

In view of the length of the study one clearly needs to keep an open mind - also because the study has not been replicated.

So the study is interesting but clearly more information is required and if anyone is to try Ginseng at those doses remember that it may interact with some medications and in particular Anti-coagulants.

Interestingly Ginseng is marketed for athletes to overcome the effects of overtraining. The jury is still out as to whether it is of any benefit

## **The dangers of mixing too many medications** (Catalyst, ABC TV, 12 August) by Chris Moyle

Approximately 200 million scripts are filled each year in Australia, and many older patients are on a dangerous cocktail of medicines which can interact with each other and even put people in hospital.

Up to 40% of elderly people take 5 or more medications every day. Australians consume more than 40 million pills each day, with some people taking 19 or even 25 - 30 tablets a day. They run into trouble if there is a drug

interaction and adverse reactions are the 4th or 5th greatest killer after heart disease, stroke and cancer. Symptoms of an adverse reaction can be delirium, falls, nausea, weakness or headache. More common problems occur with high doses of Vitamin E interacting with heart medication, causing bleeding; Ginkgo Biloba interacting with anti-platelet and anti-coagulant drugs; and St John's Wort interacting with anti-depressive drugs.

Clinical trials test the safety of individual drugs but exclude people on poly-pharmacy and drugs are tested on young healthy volunteers and only for short periods of time.

GPs are encouraged to prescribe drugs and fear litigation if they fail to do so. There is now a drug burden index which helps GPs look at how they can substitute one drug for another to help the patient feel better. Pharmacists may be helped by having electronic access to a patient's full medical record if the patient elects that to be so. Then medications can be dispensed with a full knowledge of that person's history.

Sometimes coming off medications causes people to feel better, but don't do this on your own. Always check with your doctor first.

## Woodsmoke Report

The ACT Government recently tabled its report on woodsmoke in the ACT. The report found that wood smoke in Canberra's south was contributing to unhealthy pollution levels in winter but that Canberra's air quality is not bad enough to justify a ban on domestic wood burning heaters.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, since March 1999, the percentage of households in the ACT using wood heaters has dropped from 5.7 per cent to 3.9 per cent. The Government is planning an education campaign to highlight the issues around woodsmoke. It all seems more of the same.

## Scooters for Sale

Phil the Wheelchair Factory man once again has the contract to supply scooters for hire at Floriade. And once again they will be for sale at the end of the show. The scooters will be \$1599 (current RRP \$ 3299), be cleaned and serviced and have a full 12month warranty. Colours available are blue, blue and blue.

David Bromhead also has a scooter for sale now that he no longer needs it. His scooter has led a hard life and the price he is asking reflects that. For further information, contact Laurelle on [rellis@webone.com.au](mailto:rellis@webone.com.au) or 6288 3127

## Dates for your diary

**Thursday 14 October** World Spirometry Day – part of **2010 Year of the Lung** activities - involving public lung testing in hospitals and clinics around the world

**18-24 October** Carers Week

**November** lung awareness month

**Wednesday 17 November** World COPD Day

**2011**

**Wednesday 5 April** practical session with Physio students at University of Canberra

# Living a Healthy Life with Long-Term Conditions 2010 COURSE SCHEDULE

Do you have diabetes, asthma, heart disease, arthritis, cancer,  
back pain, obesity or any condition lasting longer than 6 months?

Does it prevent you from living life as you would like?  
Cause you stress? Impact on your relationships?

To register for courses, or discuss course details please phone :

**Community Health Intake**

**Phone 6207 9977 between 8am-5pm Monday- Friday**

## **Arthritis ACT/Weston Creek Holder 6288 4244**

**October/November:**

**Wednesdays 1 2.30pm-3pm.** October 13, 20 and 27. November 3,10 and 17.

### **Belconnen Health Centre**

**October/November: Fridays 10-1 2.30pm.** October 15, 22 and 29. November 5, 12  
and 19.

## **Erindale College Community Education Program**

**or contact SHOUT Inc. 6290 1984**

**October/November:**

**Tuesdays 6.30-9pm.** October 19 and 26.

November 2,9,16 and 23.

## **Lake Ginninderra College Community Education Program Term 4**

**October/November:**

**Wednesdays 6.30-9pm.** October 20 and 27.

November 3,10,17 and 24.

## **Phillip Health Centre**

**October/November: Thursdays 10-1 2.30pm.**

October 14, 21 and 28.

Nov 4, 11, and 18.

## **Tuggeranong Health Centre**

**October/November:**

**Thursdays 10.00-1 2.30pm.** October 14, 21 and 28.

November 4,11 and 18.

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