

## May 2015 Newsletter

Providing a supportive and informative environment for people with a variety of lung conditions and their carers.

**Editor:** Helen Reynolds 02 6259 7737  
[helenrey@creationcorporation.com.au](mailto:helenrey@creationcorporation.com.au)

**Coordinator:** Margaret Geaghan 02 6254 6873  
[lung.life1@hotmail.com](mailto:lung.life1@hotmail.com)

**Next Meeting:** Thursday 14 May 2015  
10:15 am - 12 noon  
**The Burns Club**  
8 Kett Street Kambah ACT 2902

**Guest Speaker:** Beth Forbes, COPD Chronic Care Consultant

### Dates for your diary

Wednesday 29 April 2015 Education Day  
Thursday 14 May 2015 Lung Life Meeting  
Wednesday 27 May 2015 Fish'n Chips Lunch, Southern Cross Yacht Club 12 noon

### April Meeting

#### Helen Cotter

Margaret welcomed everyone to the meeting. We had a good attendance.

- We talked about how much we enjoyed the recent fish'n chips lunch outside at the Southern Cross Yacht Club. We learnt that the fish'n chips will continue in winter – but in the marquee so we decided to organise another lunch on **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May** at 12 noon (or earlier to save some tables).
- We reported back on the dinner at Parliament House that a few members attended under the auspices of the Lung Foundation. The dinner was held by Medicines Australia who represent the pharmaceutical industry in Australia.
- Pam reported back on the recent visit to the Physio students at UC. It went very well and the students are always pleased to talk to real people with a chronic illness. They also fed the participants well with morning or afternoon tea and gave them a box of confectionery.
- Lung Life has a tradition of sending cards to members when they are sick or in hospital etc. Lorna Rowlands does a superb job sending them out on our behalf but Lorna unfortunately has been sick herself, so Madeline Fleming is taking over the job for a few months. If you hear of anyone who could do with a card, please let Maddie know.
- The Burns Club is in the middle of renovation and the restaurant has temporarily changed so few people stayed to eat this time but those who did enjoyed the food and the company.

## Our speaker: Emma Baldock on Mindfulness

Emma is a counsellor at QE2 Family Centre for mothers and children. She explained that mindfulness is really living in the present – concentrating on what we are doing while we are doing it.

Mindfulness started about 30 years ago when a doctor discussed with a small group of people with chronic illness and pain ways to improve their condition. He discovered that mindfulness lessened the effects of the illness so it was studied further and has been shown to reduce the severity of conditions in many people with chronic pain as well as in mental illness. It reduces hospital admissions.

Some of our problems in thinking include:

- getting into autopilot and doing things automatically. For instance, driving along a regular route and not remembering anything about the drive;
- being judgemental – criticising ourselves; putting ourselves down; saying ‘I should have done that or I should be doing this’; being generally negative;
- Concentrating on future or past actions – thinking about one thing while you are doing something else;
- Constant worrying about every little thing, including things we have no control over.

Mindfulness is paying attention to the moment – to what you are doing at that time; to noticing the things around you. It’s learning to control our focus of attention, including our thoughts.

This allows us to choose how we respond to our thoughts. We can choose to think positively or negatively. Mindfulness helps us to realise when we are thinking negatively or putting ourselves down. When these thoughts become obvious to us, we can then work to changing them. We can work on not being judgemental about ourselves; and work on moving on from things in the past and letting go things in the future that might not happen.

Mindfulness improves with practice – a little each day will gradually build up until it becomes a habit of life.

### Some brief exercises on mindfulness

1. Pick an unhappy thought  
In front of that thought, say *I’m thinking that....*  
Change that to: *I notice I’m having the thought that...*

What is happening is a process called **defusing the thought**. It’s separating you from the thought and making it less immediate.

2. Pick a thought that bothers you.  
Now sing *Happy Birthday*, silently or aloud

Hopefully, the thought disappears. Changing a thought to a positive one brings its rewards.

3. Close your eyes for 1 minute, and become aware of your breathing  
concentrate on the breath in and out  
notice the chest movement, the abdomen movement, the feeling or the warmth of the air etc.

This is a meditation exercise as well as being good practice for mindfulness.

We enjoyed Emma’s talk and resolved to be more mindful in the future.

*It’s not what happens, it’s how you respond to it*

*Dr Phil*

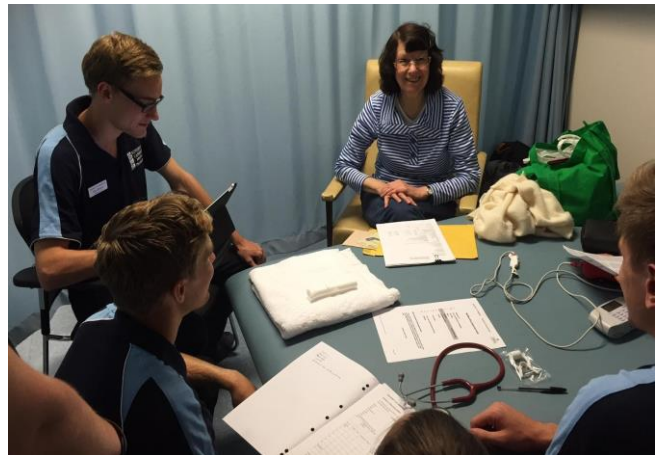


A time when  
mindfulness is  
essential

## Visits to Physiotherapy Students by Chris Moyle

### 1<sup>st</sup> Visit

On 26<sup>th</sup> March Pam kindly gave me a lift to the University of Canberra at Bruce. Pam had organised for 5 of our members to attend plus Brian from the gym. We entered our separate cubicles and met our students. I began by giving my name which is the old Christ-like “Chris” spelling rather



*Chris explaining her story*



*Pam being quizzed by Physio student*

than the new-fangled “Kris”, spelt with a “K”. I explained my lung disease, bronchiectasis, which began when I contracted Pink Disease as a baby. No-one had heard of Pink Disease, which admittedly isn’t surprising as it’s not prevalent these days. Then, wanting to add a

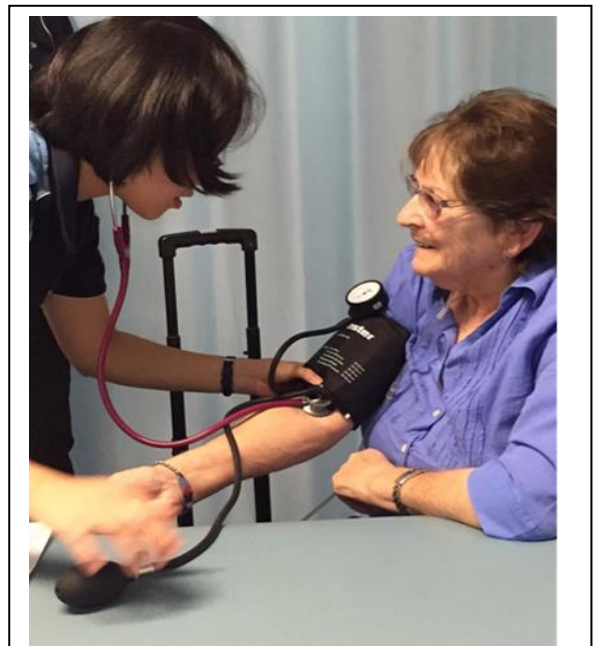
little more interest to my story, I did a spot of name-dropping, likening myself to Judith Durham, who also has bronchiectasis. They all looked blank. “Do you know Judith Durham, the singer?” I continued, but there was no positive response, even when I mentioned “The Seekers”. I was beginning to feel very old. So we moved on.



*Brian having survived the 6 minute walk*

Judith Durham might have fallen flat but excitement grew when I coughed up phlegm after Cameron had listened to my lungs.

He heard some noises in the right lung. After removal of this mucous plug I



*Judy being pressurised*

suggested he listen in again. Lo and behold this time the noise had disappeared. Cameron declared all my signs were “normal”. Buoyed on by this, I took to the walking test – a 6 minute test measuring oxygen saturation, pulse and distance covered. I exceeded the expected distance for a person of my weight, height and age with lung disease, but fell short of the expected distance for a healthy, fit person. Finally we all enjoyed a social get-together with coffee and cake.



I've lost count of the number of times I've visited the physiotherapy students but I do know they're getting younger every year

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Visit

On April Fools' Day Pam and I again joined Margaret, Caroline, Wyn and Brian for our second session. On this occasion Judy was unable to attend.



*Wyn enjoying it all*

We again had our blood pressure, pulse and oxygen saturation levels taken and blew into the spirometer to test our lung capacity. There were questions about our degree of breathlessness during different activities and our levels of anxiety, fatigue and also satisfaction with our lives. Again we all attempted the 6 minute walking test. It's



*Caroline putting all her effort into it*

interesting to note that one's oxygen saturation can increase when exercising.

At the afternoon tea gathering which followed, Bernie and Nicole, the student instructors, thanked us all for our attendance and Pam received a special thank you for once again organising another successful visit.

The students really appreciate meeting real patients and we are the only group to visit them before they take up placements in hospitals and private practices. We also benefit by getting a basic physical check-up and several attentive listening ears.



*Margaret enjoying the benefits of participation*

**There are more photos of the participants available. If you would like to see the other photos, contact me at [cotterhe@hotmail.com](mailto:cotterhe@hotmail.com)**

**Chris Moyle and Pam Harris also have copies if you'd like to contact them.**

## **The A-Z of Preventative Medicine**

**Magnesium** assists in calcium absorption. The highest concentrations of magnesium are found in nuts, legumes and unmilled grains. Green leafy vegetables and bananas are also good sources of magnesium. Magnesium regulates the utilisation and distribution of calcium in the body and thus may play a role in the regulation of bone metabolism. (From Australian Bone Density Testing Centre)

**Manganese** also assists in calcium absorption. Wholegrain and cereal products are the richest dietary source of manganese. Leafy vegetables and tea are also high in manganese. Manganese is needed for the bone matrix. It is essential for bone development and repair. It is required as a co-enzyme upon which mineralisation and calcification occurs. (From Australian Bone Density Testing Centre)

### **Travellers' Tales**

**In a Bangkok dry cleaners:** Drop your trousers here for best results.

**Outside a Paris dress shop:** Dresses for street walking.

**Outside a Hongkong dress shop:** Ladies have fits upstairs.

**In a Rhodes tailor shop:** Order your summer suit. Because is big rush we will execute customers in strict rotation.

**In a Rome laundry:** Ladies, leave your clothes here and spend the afternoon having a good time.

## **It's OK to sit close to the TV – at least for children**

Sitting too close to the TV doesn't cause short sightedness – at least in children. One cause of short sightedness (myopia) is the shape of the eyeball when the children the children are about 6 years old: in myopic people, the typically spherical eyeball becomes elongated.

Children who will grow up with normal vision are slightly far sighted when they are six. (from Canberra Times, 11 April, 2015)

## **Want to prevent an early death?**

*From Canberra Times, 11 April 2015*

The latest research shows that short bursts of vigorous exercise that get you out of breath are better than longer bouts of gentle exercise – according to a study of middle aged men and women. Scientists followed over 200,000 people for six years and found that the vigorous people lived longer than the gentle people.

I'm not sure how that applies to people with chronic lung conditions who get out of breath quite quickly.

## **What the Intergenerational Report says about older people**

*Taken from COTA newsletter, Vol 6, No 2, April/May 2015*

- Australians will have one of the longest life expectancies in the world
- The number of Australians aged 65 and over will more than double by 2055
- By 2055, there will be around 40,000 people aged 100 and over
- Workplace participation for Australians aged over 15 years is expected to decline as the community ages
- However the proportion of people over 65 in the workplace will increase from 12.9% in 2015 to 17.3% in 2055

## **Can't catch a bus? Try community transport**

*From COTA newsletter, Vol 6, No2, April/May 2015*

To use community transport, you need to register with the community organisation in your area. They do an assessment and after that, you can ring to make a booking.

- Belconnen Community Services 6264 5757
- Communities@Work (Gungahlin, Weston Creek and Tuggeranong) 6126 9090
- Northside Community Services 6247 5757
- Southside Community Services 6126 4700
- Woden Community Services 6234 6852

COTA has also published **A Guide to Getting Around Canberra** which is available from them on 6282 3777.

## **Nanna naps are good for you**

*From Gem Newsletter, a U3A site that disseminates interesting information, April 2015.*

[enquiries@u3aonline.org.au](mailto:enquiries@u3aonline.org.au)

A study from University Saarland has shown that your memory improves with a short nap of about an hour. The Neuropsychologists asked volunteers to memorise some words and word pairs. Some were then allowed to take a nap while others watched a DVD.

In the follow up test, those who had taken a nap could remember more words and word pairs than the others. The nap takers were five times better than the non-nap takers.

You may be interested to know that there's a particular type of brain activity, known as "sleep spindles," that plays an important role in memory consolidation during sleep. They are short bursts of rapid oscillations in the electroencephalogram (EEG) which is believed to consolidate certain types of memory content. Newly learned information is effectively given a label, making it easier to recall that information at some later time. The greater the number of sleep spindles appearing in the EEG, the better the person's memory of the information.

No need to feel guilty about nanna naps – they're good for you.

### **Education Day**

**Wednesday 29 April 2015**

Read the report of the topics in the next newsletter

**If you have some information that would be of interest to our readers – something that has happened to you or something you know about – something that would help other readers, please let us know.**

**If you come across information that is relevant to the readers of our newsletter, we would be very pleased if you would either send us a short article**

**or**

**send us notes about the information that we could write up for the newsletter. We would like articles on lung matters, senior matters or chronic illness matters in ACT, Australia or overseas.**