

Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (C.O.L.D.)

Introduction

Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease is one of the most common lung diseases affecting millions of people worldwide. I chose this topic for my fact sheet because my aunt suffers from C.O.L.D.. and many of my family members are life-long cigarette smokers. I am hoping that by learning more about this disease I will be able to educate and inform others of the devastating long term effects of smoking.

Section 1: Background and Problem Statement

Web site #1: Healthy People 2010

Web Address:

http://www.healthypeople.gov/Document/HTML/Volume2/24Respiratory.htm#_Toc489704826

Background information:

C.O.L.D. is a condition suffered most often by older people, making it difficult for them to breathe. It affects approximately 10 percent of people aged 65 and older. Symptoms of the disease include shortness of breath, and an ongoing cough. The prevalence of C.O.L.D. has increased more than 30 percent in the past thirty years, with no sign of decreasing. The main cause for C.O.L.D. is cigarette smoking, accounting for approximately 80 to 90 percent of cases. (Paragraph 2)

Web site # 2: National Institute of Health

Web Address: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/lung/copd/what-is-copd/index.htm>

Background Information:

C.O.L.D. is commonly known by other names such as COPD, emphysema and chronic bronchitis. This condition makes breathing progressively more difficult over time. Some of the symptoms of this disease include shortness of breath, constant coughing, fatigue, wheezing, and excess sputum production. Many of these symptoms get more severe over time, and can make everyday routines extremely challenging.

(Paragraph 2)

Web site #3: FamilyDoctor.org

Web Address:

<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/articles/706.printerview.html>

Background Information:

C.O.L.D.. is a lung disease including two main illnesses: chronic bronchitis and emphysema. With chronic bronchitis, the bronchial tube lining gets red, swollen and full of mucus. Breathing becomes more difficult due to this mucus blockage. Emphysema occurs when the alveoli are irritated, stiff, and cannot hold air. This makes it challenging for oxygen and carbon dioxide to leave the blood. (Paragraphs 3&4)

Although cigarette smoking is the main cause of C.O.L.D., other irritants such as secondhand smoke, air pollution, and cigar smoke may also contribute.

There is currently no cure for C.O.L.D., but treatments are available to help reduce the severity of the disease. The single most important treatment is to stop smoking. This can slow down the damage to the lungs. Other treatments include antibiotics, inhalants, and steroids. Severe and advanced cases of C.O.L.D.. may require the use of oxygen, surgery, or even a lung transplant.

Section 2: Research

Web site #1: American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine

Web Address: <http://ajrccm.atsjournals.org/cgi/content/short/165/6/838>

Scientific research on COPD has been slow over the past 35 years. Although studies have been conducted on many different aspects of COPD, there have been no major breakthroughs in recent years. Scientists are encouraged about future COPD research, which will incorporate new experimental approaches, and unanticipated discoveries.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute convened a working group to discuss the potential directions for future research of COPD. This group was put together because of the public health burden of COPD, and lack research progress in this area.

Web site #2: Pubmed.gov

Web Address:

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20193474?itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum&ordinalpos=2

Scientists hypothesized that “the inheritance of gene polymorphisms could influence the development of COPD, which was investigated by studying two single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNP) in exon 1 of the transforming growth factor-beta1 (TGF-beta1) gene.” This is one of many hypotheses that will be taken into consideration for future research.

Web site #3: National Heart Lung and Blood Institute

Web Address: http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/meetings/workshops/copd_wksp.htm

“Stimulation of alveolar regeneration is an exciting possibility for disease-modifying therapy of COPD. Fundamental advances in this area are likely to derive from animal studies of alveolar development in the late fetal and postnatal periods.” Although there is no cure for COPD, as of now, scientists are working hard to make new discoveries to reduce the cases of this disease.

Section 3: Statistics

Web site #1: COPD International

Web Address: <http://www.copd-international.com/library/statistics.htm>

- The World Health Organization estimates that COPD as a single cause of death shares 4th and 5th places with HIV/AIDS worldwide. In the United States, COPD currently holds 4th place for the leading cause of death, and is projected to move up to number 3 by 2020.
- The NHBLI reports that in the U.S. 12.1 million adults age 25 and older were diagnosed with COPD in 2001. An estimated 14 million Americans suffer from the disease but are undiagnosed.
- According to the CDC, there were 124,816 deaths from COPD in the U.S. in 2002.

Web site #2: CDC

Web Address: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5745a4.htm>

- In 2005, approximately one in 20 deaths in the U.S. had COPD as the underlying cause.
- During 2000-2005, 718,077 deaths were attributed to COPD.
- For each year during 2000-2005, there were higher mortality rates among whites than persons of all other races.

Section 4: Consumer Information

Web site #1: MayoClinic.com

Web Address:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/copd/DS00916/DSECTION=symptoms>

In the vast majority of cases, the lung damage that leads to COPD is caused by long-term cigarette smoking. Symptoms of COPD do not usually appear until damage to the lungs has already occurred. By the time the symptoms appear, the damage is too severe to be reversed. Treatments are given to slow down the progression, but no cure is currently available.

Exacerbations, or episodes of worsening symptoms, may occur suddenly among people with COPD.

Web site #2: American Association of Respiratory Care

Web Address: http://www.aarc.org/patient_education/tips/copd.html

People with COPD should eat a balanced diet to boost the body's immune system. Eating a diet full of nutrient-rich foods helps COPD sufferers to fight infections, prevent illness, and cut down on hospital visits.

Web site #3: International COPD Coalition

Web Address:

<http://www.internationalcopd.org/materials/patients/learn/facts.aspx>

- The World Health Organization estimates that there are 600 million people suffering from COPD worldwide.
- 80% of COPD sufferers are hospitalized following an exacerbation episode.

Section 5: Solutions to the Problem (or Issue)

Web site #1: COPD-Support, Inc

Web Address: <http://www.copd-support.com/>

COPD-Support, Inc is a non-profit organization that provides programs for COPD patients and caregivers. It allows for people to ask questions, and provides support groups for sufferers of the disease. It allows for COPD sufferers to learn from the experiences of others with the disease.

Web site #2: MDJunction.com

Web Address: <http://www.mdjunction.com/copd>

This Web site is a support group for people affected by COPD. Their mission statement is that they are a community of patients, family members, and friends dedicated to dealing with COPD, together. This site provides a chat room for sharing experiences, articles to inform, doctor locators, and other helpful information.

Web site #3: Organized Wisdom

Web Address:

http://organizedwisdom.com/I_Have_Copd_An_Anonymous_Group_with_Personal_Stories_Support_Forums_Quizzes_News_Help_Group_Discussion_Advice/149491/360378/health

This Web site provides the top 10 support groups and forums for COPD sufferers. It allows COPD sufferers to join anonymous support chat rooms and discussion boards. It provides great tips for emotional support for sufferers of the disease.

Conclusion:

C.O.L.D., the 4th leading cause of death in the U.S., is a preventable disease. Approximately 90% of cases would disappear if only cigarette smoking ceased to exist. Early detection and treatment may dramatically decrease the progression of the disease, but no cure has been discovered. Hopefully our nation will collectively stand up against smoking, and COPD will become an issue of the past.

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Back to Fact Sheet Directory	http://www.bettycjung.net/Pch202fs.htm