



Mainstay of the global workforce – 40–65 year olds – hit hardest by chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

*- New report highlights global economic burden of the disease -
- An estimated two billion work hours lost each week -*

LONDON, England (World COPD Day, November 18, 2009) – COPD Uncovered, a new report issued today reveals for the first time that people between the ages of 40 to 65 are emerging as the new face of this disease. Authored by Education for Health and other leading experts, the report uncovers a new, younger majority of COPD patients¹ who are in the prime of their career, and financially responsible for the care of their children and aging parents. The authors call for policymakers to read the report and challenge their thinking on how COPD should be addressed in this critical age group who are highly depended upon by society as leading wage earners^{2,3}.

COPD affects 210 million people and is predicted to be the third leading cause of death globally in ten years time⁴. A severely debilitating disease, COPD dramatically impairs the productivity of this population. In fact, the report found that people between 40 and 65 with COPD miss as many as ten hours of work per week because of their condition⁵. On a global scale, that represents more than two billion working hours lost each week worldwide. Additionally, COPD causes nearly 28,000 years of lost productivity annually⁶. The report deduces that if left unchecked, COPD could have significant global workforce and economic implications on patients, families, employers and society as the disease escalates.

“Given the potential economic impact, it is critical that 40 to 65 year olds with COPD are able to lead an active and productive life,” said Monica Fletcher, Chief Executive of Education for Health. “In releasing this report we want to spark an important global dialogue with key global stakeholders on how best to invest in earlier diagnosis and the management of these younger patients.”

OTHER KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE REPORT INCLUDE:

- **COPD COSTS MORE THAN ASTHMA AND DIABETES** – The cost of COPD exceeds that of many other serious, long-term conditions including asthma and diabetes⁷. The worldwide burden of COPD is nearly double that of diabetes and it causes more deaths⁶.
- **EFFECTIVE COPD TREATMENT MUST LOOK BEYOND SMOKING CESSATION** – It is true that the primary cause of COPD is cigarette smoke⁸ and smoking cessation is an important part of COPD management. Yet many former smokers develop symptoms and are diagnosed a decade or two after they stopped. In fact, even if all smoking stopped today, the effect on COPD statistics would not be seen for up to 20 years⁹.
- **COPD PUTS PRESSURE ON HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS** – One in six European and U.S. patients had visited the ER or hospital in a six month period 2006-2007⁵. Extrapolating these figures indicates that up to 64 million COPD patients globally may be admitted to hospital due to their condition each year. Additionally, a large majority of COPD patients suffer from co-morbidities, such as heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes¹⁰⁻¹³. In fact, 40 percent suffer from heart disease¹⁰ and as many as 42 percent from high blood pressure^{12,13}.
- **FAMILIES MAY ALSO FACE BURDEN** – More women than men are now being diagnosed with COPD¹⁴ – a patient segment central to family care.

About COPD

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a debilitating, life-threatening and progressive lung disease that interferes with normal breathing⁸. It is thought to cause around three million deaths per year – on average one person every 10 seconds⁴. COPD refers to emphysema and chronic bronchitis – two commonly co-existing diseases of the lung. Due to lung deterioration, people with COPD experience symptoms like chronic shortness of breath and cough that impact the ability to lead an active and productive life⁸. There is no cure for COPD but it can be treated.

About COPD Uncovered

COPD Uncovered represents the combined efforts of a multi-disciplinary committee of international experts, coming together to bring forward some of the most burning issues in COPD today. Their aim is to highlight the impact of COPD in an understudied and ignored patient segment between the ages of 40 and 65.

The COPD Uncovered initiative is a compendium of research and analysis undertaken by experts in respiratory health. This initiative is sponsored by Novartis Pharma AG and is administered by a Secretariat from Chandler Chicco Companies (CCC). The studies underlying the COPD Uncovered Report were commissioned by Novartis Pharma AG.

Following the release of this report, the COPD Uncovered experts are conducting further quantitative research into the direct and indirect costs of the disease among this age group. In 2010, they expect to release the results of the study that will look at the specific impact of COPD on the daily lives of more than 2,000 COPD patients aged 45-67 from the U.S., the UK, Germany, Brazil, China and Turkey.

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The COPD Uncovered Report, issued on World COPD Day 2009, is authored by the following individuals, supported by Novartis with editorial assistance from medical education specialists from CCC:

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To download a copy of the COPD Uncovered report, visit:

<http://bit.ly/3n99Yu>

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