

April 2002 Press Releases

Physicians and Caregivers Learn About the Power of the Pen

(Northbrook, Illinois, April 16, 2002) - Encouraging chronically ill patients to keep a journal improves their physical and emotional well-being, says James W. Pennebaker, PhD, professor of psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. At an education course, entitled "Family Stories: Meeting the Challenges of Chronic Illness," Dr. Pennebaker will teach physicians, social workers and other caregivers about the power of journaling in coping with a chronic disease. The course, which is sponsored by The Cancer Wellness Center and The CHEST Foundation, will be held on April 26th at the Alfred Soffer Educational Center at the American College of Chest Physicians, 3300 Dundee Road, in Northbrook, Ill.

"Often, patients experience many mixed and confusing emotions as they try to figure out how their disease will impact their lives," explains Dr. Pennebaker, the program's keynote speaker. "Expressing thoughts and emotions on paper can have physical and mental health benefits, and facilitate valuable conversations with family members."

Dr. Pennebaker specializes in social psychology and health, with an emphasis on how individuals, groups and cultures respond to traumatic events. His research has shown that inhibiting emotional responses can lead to negative health consequences. In his presentation, Dr. Pennebaker will explore the power of journaling in coping with chronic illness and underscore the importance of health care providers helping their patients use journaling in a clinical setting.

Health care professionals, social workers, psychologists, clergy, caregivers and patient advocates will participate in the one-day course to learn the skills that will help them teach their patients to deal more effectively with the difficult and complicated issues of chronic illness. The program is designed to provide the tools that physicians and caregivers need to assist their patients, and will address the following:

- Σhow writing in a journal can help facilitate conversations and initiate active coping
- Σthe relationship between self-disclosure and physical healing
- Σbeneficial ways of looking at and relating to the illness
- Σhow active involvement on the part of the patient can benefit the treatment
- Σthe psychosocial challenges of chronic illness for the physician/patient relationship
- Σthe beneficial role that "life review" stories can have on patients

The author of eight books and more than 130 articles and book chapters, Dr. Pennebaker has devoted his career to examining the relationship between self-disclosure and health. Afternoon sessions will be led by a team of distinguished faculty, including: Jill Freedman, LCSW; Gene Combs, MD; Melissa Hart, MA; Michael Preodor, MD; and Mary Frances Schneider, PhD.

Physicians and health care professionals interested in participating can register by calling ACCP member services at 1-800-343-2227 or visiting www.chestnet.org to register online.

The Cancer Wellness Center is a community-based organization whose mission is, through psychosocial support and education, to empower those affected by cancer to enhance the quality of their lives.

The CHEST Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP), whose mission is to provide resources to advance prevention and treatment of chest diseases. End-of-life care is a priority of The CHEST Foundation and is pursued through education, collaboration, communication, and recognition.

Note to Editors :Dr. Pennebaker is available for interviews.

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Brooklyn Hospital Rescue Workers' Communication Devices Better Than Ever

(Brooklyn, NY, April 11, 2002) - Paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMT) once again can communicate with their base at Long Island College Hospital, thanks to a contribution from The CHEST Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP).

The hospital, located just a few miles from Ground Zero, lost nearly \$250,000 in equipment and vehicles on September 11th, including hand-held radios used by paramedics and EMTs to communicate with base operations at the hospital. The Foundation's \$15,000 contribution enables the purchase of 15 Con-Space Radio Accessories that will allow emergency workers to talk on two-way radios without removing their breathing apparatus. Throat microphones and earpieces keep hands free for rescue work.

"The state-of-the-art equipment made available to us through the generosity of The CHEST Foundation enables us to continue to provide New Yorkers with a top-notch facility fully prepared for any eventuality, despite our losses on September 11th," says Mark McDougle, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Long Island College Hospital.

The hospital is hosting a celebration on April 11th to present the Foundation gift and dedicate a new ambulance that replaces one lost in the World Trade Center disaster. Guests will include schoolchildren who helped raise funds for the ambulance, WTC survivors who were treated at the hospital, firefighters and community officials and residents.

"Following September 11th, The CHEST Foundation immediately established a fund to help New York recover and rebuild," said the Foundation's President-elect Diane E.

Stover, MD, FCCP. "As soon as an ACCP member called to tell us about the significant equipment loss at Long Island College Hospital, we knew where we wanted to direct some of our funds. This equipment is made possible by people who genuinely care about New York and are committed to restoring rescue operations."

Contributions to the Foundation's 9/11 Emergency Response Fund come from ACCP members and friends. In addition, a fundraising event was held recently in ACCP's hometown, Northbrook, Illinois, where 450 community members turned out for a concert by a locally renowned 60s band, The Starting Line-Up. The venue, dinner, drinks and music were donated by local businesses and individuals and ticket revenues were donated to the Fund.

Headquartered in Northbrook, IL, The CHEST Foundation's mission is to improve lung health for patients and communities through education focused on public health issues. ACCP represents more than 15,000 members who provide clinical, respiratory, and cardiothoracic patient care in the U.S. and throughout the world. ACCP's mission is to promote the prevention and treatment of diseases of the chest through leadership, education, research and communication.

Long Island College Hospital is a 516-bed facility that has served residents of Brooklyn and the wider metropolitan area since 1858. The hospital combines the best features of a major medical center, through teaching and research, with the personal approach of a community-centered hospital

Note to Editors: Photograph and cut-line are available. Please call for more information.

April 2002 Press Releases

Surgery Found to Improve Chronic Cough Due to Gerd When Medical Therapy to Suppress Acid Does Not

"Chronic Cough due to Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease"

Richard S. Irwin, MD, FCCP; John K. Kawacki, MD, Mark M. Wilson, MD; et al
CHEST 2002; 121:1132-1140

PDF

(Northbrook, IL, April 9, 2002) - In a recent article published in CHEST, the peer-reviewed journal of the American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP), researchers found that chronic cough due to gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is not always caused by acid. The study showed that intensive medicinal therapy, including intensive acid suppression may fail to improve chronic cough. When this occurs antireflux surgery can eliminate or significantly improve chronic cough due to GERD.

GERD, a clinical condition that affects 7 million people in the U.S. alone, is one of the most common causes of chronic cough in all age groups. It occurs when there is a severe reflux of stomach contents into the esophagus, causing certain symptoms and possible

damage. Symptoms include heartburn, regurgitation of gastric juice, chest pain, difficulty breathing and chronic cough.

"There is a subgroup of patients with chronic cough whose intragastric or stomach acidity can be completely or nearly completely suppressed with acid therapy yet they can still have their cough due to GERD," said Richard S. Irwin, MD, FCCP, of the University of Massachusetts Medical School Department of Medicine in Worcester, Mass. "What we've found is that chronic cough is caused not only by acid, but by non-acid mediators such as enzymes as well."

Conducted at the University of Massachusetts, the study included eight patients with chronic cough due to GERD who were found to be resistant to medical therapy. The patients - seven women and one man - were selected from a subgroup of a larger cohort that is being studied to determine the long-term effects of antireflux surgery for chronic cough.

Following surgery, all patients either noted that their coughs had disappeared or that there was a notable improvement. Direct observations found that patients' responses were maintained one year after surgery and long-term follow-up found the same results from 2.5 to 4 years after the surgery.

"The charge of any physician is to improve patient care and quality of life," said ACCP President Sidney S. Braman, MD, FCCP. "As a result of this study, we now have a better idea of what's causing the chronic cough and can recommend treatment options for those patients who don't respond to widely used therapies."

All study participants were evaluated for a minimum of three months of medical therapy - a combination of an anti-reflux diet and other lifestyle modifications, acid suppression with a proton pump inhibitor and/or histamine type-2 antagonist and prokinetic therapy. The eight patients whose chronic cough persisted after this time were evaluated for anti-reflux surgery even if surgery had already been performed.

Before the operation, physicians assessed for laryngeal changes typical of GERD-induced injury using flexible bronchoscopy, as well as for other factors that could be contributing to the chronic cough. GI evaluations were conducted to assess for other abnormalities. Cough severity and the impact of the cough on patients' health were also evaluated.

CHEST is a peer-reviewed journal published by the American College of Chest Physicians. It is available online each month at www.chestjournal.org. ACCP represents more than 15,000 members who provide clinical, respiratory, and cardiothoracic patient care in the U.S. and throughout the world. ACCP's mission is to promote the prevention and treatment of diseases of the chest through leadership, education, research and communication.