



Health Bulletin



Simple, Easy-To-Use Screener May Help ID Common But Unknown Lung Disease

(NAPSA)—If you're a current or former smoker, could the chronic cough you have be a sign you've got one of the most underdiagnosed and under-recognized diseases in the country?

Maybe. A new study published in the *Journal of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease* reveals that a five-item questionnaire could help you find out. It lets you screen for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)—a leading cause of disability and the fourth-leading cause of death in America.

Called the Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Population Screener™ (COPD PS) and available at www.copdscreener1.com, it's the first self-scored screener that can potentially predict your COPD risk.

People with COPD experience wheezing and shortness of breath that leads to decreased activity over time. It's thought the COPD PS may help physicians learn if their patients are at risk for COPD, which may allow them to get the help they need to improve their breathing problems.

"If you diagnose COPD, you can manage its impact. If not, it can be extremely debilitating," says Fernando Martinez, M.D., MS from the University of Michigan Health System. "Also, because people live with COPD for many years, tools like the Population Screener may be helpful in diagnosing people early."

Self-Scoring COPD

Five questions could determine your risk of a common, debilitating disease:

- During the past four weeks, how much of the time did you feel short of breath?
- Do you ever cough up any "stuff," such as mucus or phlegm?
- Do you limit activities because of your breathing problems?
- Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your entire life?
- How old are you?



About COPD

An umbrella condition that includes chronic bronchitis, emphysema or both, COPD is a progressive disease that primarily affects former and current smokers. But it can also be caused by exposure to indoor air pollution, as well as occupational exposure to certain airborne dusts. Heredity may also be a risk factor.

Characterized by a frequent or chronic cough and decreased lung function over time, it's believed to affect about 24 million people. Perhaps because its symptoms are often mistaken for signs of aging, being out of shape, asthma or smoker's cough, fewer than 12.1 million people have actually been diagnosed.

About the COPD Population Screener

The COPD PS, based on a list of symptoms that were found to be strongly associated with COPD, was developed by a clinicians work-

ing group made up of lung specialists, primary care doctors and a respiratory therapist, in conjunction with Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals Inc., Pfizer Inc, and Quality Metrics, Inc. Nearly 300 patients took the screener in their doctors' offices and then received a lung function test to determine if they had COPD. Of all the questions posed, 23 of them were significant in predicting COPD. These items were pared down to the five questions that had the highest correlation to COPD. Questions featured in the screener include:

- During the past four weeks, how much of the time did you feel short of breath?
- Do you ever cough up any "stuff," such as mucus or phlegm?
- Do you limit activities because of your breathing problems?
- Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your entire life?
- How old are you?

After completing the PS, you can determine your score by assigning a value between zero and two to each of your answers and then totaling your points.

If you score between five and 10 points, it indicates that your breathing problems may be related to COPD. It's suggested that people with a high score visit their doctor for what's known as a spirometry test, which is used to measure lung function.

To learn more or to download the tool, visit www.copdscreener1.com.