

Year of the Lung: A campaign all over the world

Although, hundreds of millions of people suffer and millions die every year from respiratory diseases, Lung health has been neglected in public discourse and on the political and scientific agendas.

In order to reverse this unacceptable global situation the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) which includes the European Respiratory Society (ERS) as well as the American Thoracic Society (ATS), the American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP), the Asian Pacific Society of Respiriology (APSR), the Asociacion Latinoamericana del Torax (ALAT) and the IUATLD declared unanimously the year 2010 as the Year of the Lung. The main aim of this campaign is to increase the awareness of the Lung diseases worldwide.

The health, social and economic burden caused by respiratory illness is immense globally and may lead in bankruptcy the health resources even in the well developed countries. It is well known that in contrast to other chronic diseases such as the cardiovascular, COPD is on an increase prevalence and mortality course. In addition, epidemiological data of other respiratory illness such as Tu-

berculosis, Pneumonias including H1N1 flu, asthma, occupational lung disease support the argument that respiratory diseases are among the major killing diseases in the world. This is why we do need the Year of the Lung advocacy campaign.

In detail the aims and objectives of this awareness campaign are:

1. To promote global advocacy on Lung health and diseases;
2. Act to prevent lung diseases;
3. To diagnose lung diseases early in their course;
4. Increase funding for research on the respiratory system;
5. To promote legislations in favor of clean air and tobacco-free environment.

More than four hundred organizations and scientific societies including the Portuguese Respiratory Society are invited to become partners in this effort and unite behind this worldwide call for action against lung diseases. Each of the seven international sister societies of FIRS will be responsible and will organize and co-ordinate activities in their continent. ERS will co-ordinate the Year of the Lung events in Europe.

¹ MD, PhD, President of European Respiratory Society (ERS)

Year of the Lung in Europe

The European Chapter of the YoL is based on the co-operation of all the National Respiratory Societies of Europe. The launch in Europe will take place in Marseille, France during the *Congres de Pneumologie de Langue Française (SPLF)*.

The next major event will take place in April 13th in Brussels when all the Presidents of the National European Societies (FERS), with the leadership of ERS, will visit the European parliament to meet with Members of the Parliament, the Health, Research and Environmental Commissioners. We will strongly try to lobby for more funding and resources for research, for more strict laws against air pollution and climate change that affect the respiratory system in order to prevent respiratory illnesses.

It is obviously, the important role of each of the National Respiratory Societies for the success of this event by attracting the attention of its countries National MP's and by inviting them to take part in this meeting.

In addition in collaboration with the Spanish and Belgian Presidencies of EU during the year 2010 meetings will take place on chronic Respiratory disease and on Home delivery care in respiratory diseases.

Another important global event that will take place in October 14th, 2010 is the World Spirometry Day. During this day free Spirometry will be performed for the public in Hospitals, Offices, primary care establishments and may be tents across the world. The Portuguese Pulmonologists are kindly invited to take part in this novel event.

It is thought that if this event is successful and a large number of spirometry tests were performed in each country the same day, it will create great publicity for respiratory health and disease issues, worldwide.

The Role of European National Respiratory Societies

The campaign of the Year of the Lung in each European country should be coordinated by the National Society of the country. The National Society would be responsible for promoting the objectives of the campaign using the local media during various world respiratory Days such as the Asthma day (4/5/2010) the COPD Day (17/11/2010) the Lung Cancer Day (4/2/2010) ect. Moreover, during the annual meeting of each Society the efforts of the awareness should be intensified by mentioning the YoL in the opening ceremony, by using the Logo of the YoL, by specific sessions during the scientific program and by press conferences.

In addition, the National Society may use this opportunity to meet with local Politicians and Government officers to promote Lung health and disease at a local or National level.

The success of the World Spirometry Day, a European idea, depends primarily on the National Societies and on the mobilization of their members.

Finally, the year of the lung is the multifaced campaign that aims to raise the awareness about the importance of the Respiratory system, to generate social and political support for the prevention and treatment of lung diseases and lobbying for more funding for research in lung disease.

I do invite all Portuguese Pulmonologists to support this global call of action against lung disease.

More information can be found on the website www.2010yearofthelung.org, but ideas are welcomed to make the most of this global and important event.