

**Press Release: 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2011**

***Personal, Economic and Societal Burden of COPD Revealed in  
New Peer-Reviewed Publication***

*COPD Uncovered Expands Global Understanding about COPD impact in  
Working Aged Populations*

**Warwick, UK 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2011:** Landmark research, published today for the first time in the peer reviewed 'BMC Public Health' Journal, provides a substantive insight into the economic, social and personal impact of COPD for working aged patients across the world.

*COPD Uncovered: An international survey on the impact of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) on a working age population;*<sup>1</sup> reveals the true extent to which people with COPD experience a significant decrease in their overall level of lifetime earnings, and face a future of financial uncertainty:

- COPD patients lose an average of around \$1800 of their income each year as a direct result of their condition, equating to an estimated lifetime loss of nearly \$20,000 per individual.
- In addition, nearly 1 in 5 of 45-67 year olds with COPD are forced to retire prematurely due to the condition, thereby incurring increased healthcare utilisation health costs, reducing their personal tax and pension contributions and increasing disability allowance costs to governments
- People with COPD feel unable to confidently plan for the future. The impact of COPD on people's earning power and overall household income makes them concerned about its future impact on their lives, and those of their family, and their ability to maintain the same lifestyle as they had before

Previous studies in the US and Europe have attempted to highlight the financial burden of COPD by estimating the direct costs of health care utilization or lost productivity<sup>2,3,4,5</sup>. However, direct costs only account for a proportion of overall cost, and studies to date have not captured the full extent of the personal economic burden in terms of impact on younger individuals and their families, as well as society as a whole. As such, the publication of COPD Uncovered within the BMC Health Journal will help healthcare professionals and policy makers uncover the true impact of the disease, hopefully raising it up the Global health policy agenda.



education for health

*“COPD Uncovered highlights the devastating impact of COPD on a working age population and how the cost of the illness is more extensive than has previously been recognised”, explained Monica Fletcher, Chief Executive of Education for Health, and COPD Uncovered lead author. “Significant cost, societal and quality of life benefits could be achieved if greater steps were taken to prevent the condition, such as more intensive work based smoking cessation programs, earlier diagnosis and appropriate management strategies to control symptoms and arrest disease progression”*

COPD is rapidly becoming one of the world’s most serious health issues. The illness is thought to affect 210 million people worldwide<sup>6</sup>, although it is estimated that only half of these people have been diagnosed. Whilst there is no cure for COPD, the condition is preventable and treatable.

COPD Uncovered is an international cross-sectional survey involving 2,426 participants aged between 45 and 67 across six countries (Brazil, China, Germany, Turkey, USA and UK). Inclusion criteria were a recalled physician diagnosis of COPD, a smoking history of more than 10 pack years and the use of COPD medications in the previous three months prior to questioning<sup>1</sup>.

The *“COPD Uncovered: An International survey on the impact of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) on a working age population”* journal article is available online via the BMC Public Health website [http: www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/11/612/abstract](http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/11/612/abstract)

Additional data from COPD Uncovered will be presented at the forthcoming European Respiratory Society (ERS) congress, which takes place during 24<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September in Amsterdam, NI.

For further information, or to request an interview with a member of the COPD Uncovered Research team, please contact:

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**Notes to editors:**

**About COPD**

- COPD is a debilitating, life-threatening and progressive lung disease that interferes with normal breathing.
- Symptoms are often mistakenly attributed to ageing or other respiratory diseases such as asthma, resulting in COPD being undetected in about 50% of cases<sup>7</sup> and misdiagnosed in about 23%<sup>8</sup>.
- A 30% increase in prevalence is expected by the year 2030<sup>9</sup>.
- The estimated prevalence of COPD includes approximately 4-13% of adults in Europe and approximately 7% of adults in the United States<sup>10</sup>
- While COPD was previously more common in men, an increase in smoking among women has led to the disease affecting men and women almost equally<sup>6</sup>.

**About COPD Uncovered<sup>1</sup>:**

- 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. COPD Uncovered is funded by an unrestricted educational grant from Novartis Pharma AG.

**About BMC Public Health Journal:**

- *BMC Public Health* is an open access journal publishing original peer-reviewed research articles in the epidemiology of disease and the understanding of all aspects of public health.
- The journal has a special focus on the social determinants of health, the environmental, behavioural, and occupational correlates of health and disease, and the impact of health policies, practices and interventions on the community.
- *BMC Public Health* (ISSN 1471-2458) is indexed/tracked/covered by PubMed, MEDLINE, CAS, EMBASE, Scopus, Current Contents, FSTA, CABI, Thomson Reuters (ISI) and Google Scholar.

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