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New Quality of Life Tool for COPD Patients Launched: Foundation Endorses COPD Assessment Test (CAT)

WASHINGTON, DC (September 18, 2009)—At the European Respiratory Society Conference in Vienna, Austria, leading scientific members of the COPD Assessment Test (CAT) steering committee launched a new tool that experts say will improve communication between health care providers and patients.

Dr. Stephen Rennard, Larson Professor of Medicine at the University of Nebraska, says conventional questions and general responses fail to convey important information in the context of COPD.

“The availability of the CAT will help facilitate communication that will improve the care of patients with COPD,” Dr. Rennard says of the new tool that is also expected to measure the COPD patient’s quality of life more accurately and help patients monitor their lung health over time.

The CAT is based on the St. George’s Questionnaire—a comprehensive quality of life questionnaire endorsed by most medical professional organizations, and used in a high percentage of clinical research studies and clinical trials. The CAT’s shorter format (eight questions) and COPD-specific focus, is set to encourage physicians to use this type of tool more often with their patients living with COPD.

Dr. Byron Thomashow, Medical Director at the New York Presbyterian Hospital and Chairman of the COPD Foundation Board of Directors, says too often time restraints limit the questions health care providers ask their patients.

“Regarding COPD, often the sole query is, ‘How’s your breathing?’ This often generates a limited and at times, misleading response,” Dr. Thomashow says.

The CAT survey will help overcome communication barriers between patients and their physicians, and help patients monitor their lung health over time.

“The CAT survey with eight simple questions in a few minutes can provide health care providers and their patients a much clearer overview and an ability to better follow the course of the disease,” says Dr. Thomashow. “It could well change the way we look at COPD.”

The questions in the CAT were developed through many interviews with COPD patients and collaboration with international researchers, patient groups, and professional societies. The test addresses cough, phlegm, chest tightness, breathlessness, activity limitation, confidence, sleep, and energy.

“The COPD Foundation congratulates the members of CAT working group for developing this important resource for patients and their health care providers, and for including extensive patient input in the development and validation of this instrument,” says John Walsh, President of the COPD Foundation and an individual with COPD. “The COPD Assessment Test will be extremely valuable for individuals with COPD and their health care providers to effectively communicate and longitudinally track their health status.”

The CAT will immediately be available on the COPD Foundation website for free download for all users (www.copdfoundation.org) and will be included in the comprehensive health management guide, COPD Big Fat Reference Guide®, to be launched in October. The COPD Foundation will broadly disseminate the CAT with detailed explanation of use to all COPD patient advocacy organizations and relevant medical professional societies. The CAT can be accessed directly at www.catestonline.org in different languages.

The COPD Foundation applauds GlaxoSmithKline for supporting this project in order for it to be widely available and freely accessible to patients and health care providers worldwide.

About the COPD Foundation:

The COPD Foundation is dedicated to developing and supporting programs which improve the quality of life through research, education, early diagnosis, and enhanced therapy for persons whose lives are impacted by Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). The COPD Foundation has several programs dedicated to informing, empowering, educating, and engaging individuals affected by COPD, including both diagnosed and undiagnosed individuals, their families and friends, and their medical professionals. For more information, please visit: www.copdfoundation.org.

CAT Working Group Members:

Professor Alvar Agusti, Hospital Clinic, University of Barcelona, Spain
Dr. William Bailey, University of Alabama Lung Health Center, Birmingham, Alabama
Dr. Otto Bauerle, Centro Medico Las Americas, Merida, Mexico
Dr. David Halpin, Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital, Exeter, UK
Professor Christine Jenkins, Woolcock Institute of Medical Research, NSW, Australia
Professor Paul Jones, St. George’s, University of London, UK
Dr. Peter Kardos, Maingau Hospital, Frankfurt, Germany
Dr. Mark Levy, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

Dr. Fernando Martinez, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
Dr. Marc Miravittles, Hospital Clinic, University of Barcelona, Spain
Dr. Stephan Molitor, University of Hanover, Germany
Professor David Price, University of Aberdeen, UK
Dr. Nicolas Roche, University of Paris 5, France
Dr. Marianella Salapatas, President of the European Federation of Allergy and Airway
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