All together to end COPD: The Forum of International Respiratory Societies

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a preventable and treatable disease that causes breathlessness, chronic sputum production and cough. There are 300 million current cases of COPD in the world. COPD is currently the third leading cause of death globally and is highly prevalent in low resource countries. Exposure to tobacco smoke and other inhaled toxic particles and gases are the main risk factors for COPD, although recent research has identified that suboptimal lung growth before and after birth can also increase the risk of COPD later in life.

World COPD Day is an annual global initiative run by the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD), who along with the Pan African Thoracic Society are members of the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS).

The goal of World COPD Day is to raise awareness and present new knowledge and novel therapeutic strategies for COPD worldwide. This year, the 18th annual World COPD Day will take place on 20 November 2019. This year’s theme, “All Together to End COPD” emphasises the fact that many people are involved in the fight to end COPD. At every stage and at any age, there is an opportunity to prevent or treat COPD. From care providers, families and patients, to policy makers and employers - everyone can make an impact.

Initiatives to reduce the burden of COPD are taking place worldwide, including smoking-cessation programmes, fighting against both indoor and outdoor air pollution, as well as examining childhood disadvantage factors. Although there is no current cure for COPD, action can take place at any stage of the disease by a variety of individuals in many types of settings. Employers can strive for safe breathing environments, citizens can be good stewards of air cleanliness, and both patients and families can help advocate for more research and better access to care. Providers and policy makers can work together to improve access to spirometry, essential medications, and other treatments like pulmonary rehabilitation in addition to furthering research to improve patient outcomes.

FIRS invites everyone to participate in World COPD Day events on the 20 November 2019. Further information about World COPD Day can be found here.
About the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS)

The Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) is an organisation comprised of the world’s leading international respiratory societies working together to improve lung health globally: American College of Chest Physicians (CHEST), American Thoracic Society (ATS), Asian Pacific Society of Respirology (APSR), Asociación Latino Americana De Tórax (ALAT), European Respiratory Society (ERS), International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases (The Union), Pan African Thoracic Society (PATS), Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA), and the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD).

The goal of FIRS is to unify and enhance efforts to improve lung health through the combined work of its more than 70,000 members globally.

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