

Coping with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. Elaine Fantle Shimberg. Foreword by Thomas L Petty MD. New York: St Martin's Griffin. 2003. Soft cover, 224 pages, \$13.95.

An introductory paragraph to this review is in order. This is a patient's (not a clinician's) review. In 1979 I was diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and advanced emphysema. I am at risk for spontaneous pneumothorax, I have survived multiple spontaneous collapses of the right and left lung, and I can attest to the terror of those events. The descriptions and information in **Coping with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease** I found to be very accurate. The author describes with clarity and force the terror and the sense of being buried alive. In these days of the 18-minute office visit with your doctor, this book will be an invaluable manual that is easily read and understood by COPD patients and their families and loved ones. Of course, this book will be a quick read for doctors and other clinicians and the professional medical community as a whole.

Coping is exactly what the COPD patient has to do every day, and we have here an excellent book that deals directly with day-to-day activities in a well organized and easily understood format for us regular folk! This text deserves the recommendation of medical professionals to their patients, both at the earliest stages of the disease and at diagnosis. This will help the 18-minute doctor visit to be a much more rewarding experience for both the patient and the doctor.

The book's material, from a lay person's perspective, seems factual, accurate, and without exaggeration. In the introduction the author clearly cautions the reader to seek professional care and diagnosis. She then puts forth an "A-Z" picture of coping with this terrible and at times frightening disease. The book is well organized and the writing is clear and interesting, which encourages the reader to read on.

The book is divided into 2 parts. Part One, entitled "Understanding and Treating COPD," includes 4 chapters: "What is Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease?"; "How COPD is Diagnosed"; "Treatments for COPD"; and "What Caregivers Need to Know." Part Two is called "Living with COPD" and it comprises 2 chapters: "The A-Zs of Living with COPD" and "Conclu-

sion." At the end there are sections that list COPD resources and suggested reading, and the book has an index.

The sections flow logically and help the reader understand the complex nature of COPD. I think the book will help set the reader at ease. The author has done a marvelous job in this respect. The patient, loved ones, family, and caregivers can get a thorough understanding of what they will have to deal with for the rest of their lives. Dr Tom Petty wrote the book's foreword, and he calls the book a "Masterpiece." I agree! This book will go a long way toward relieving the frustrations and fear of all involved.

The author begins with the pre-diagnosis period, then discusses diagnosis, the doctor-patient relationship and communication (in both directions), and treatments. Pursed-lips breathing is described in detail. Oxygen equipment and the proper handling and use of oxygen are also described, and the author describes real-life COPD events in detail, in particular the subject of travel. Here we are learning that (gee whiz!) we can still do things in life that we did before, and we are not destined to a life alone, stuck on a couch or in a bed.

The intense issues of possible surgical intervention are discussed in an easy-to-understand and compassionate way. Lung transplant and lung-volume-reduction surgery are covered. The discussion of risk/benefit analysis is well done. Success and failure rates are discussed, and one gets the sense of *hope* when reading these lines, as we continue on our journey through coping with COPD. The author has succeeded in bridging the education gap between the medical professional and the patient and family that exists because of time constraints and the complexity of the disease. That the book is user-friendly and so easily read deserves praise from doctors and patients alike.

The author devotes a complete chapter to the needs of the caregiver. How I can relate to the importance of the COPD patient's spouse and the extreme stress that spouses endure! The book does a wonderful job in educating the caregiver and assigning him or her the level of respect that he/she so surely deserves. The author covers living wills, medical record-keeping, activities of daily living, etc. The author emphasizes that the caregivers needs proper rest, exercise,

nutrition, and *time off from caregiving!* The book addresses how to avoid depression and, more importantly, how to recognize the symptoms of depression. A caregiver must strive to maintain his or her own personal health. A sick caregiver cannot help a COPD patient.

The author then takes on the personal subject of the patient's desire to live. The book talks about dressing, music therapy, exercise, and travel. The author discusses the importance of having a good oxygen provider—one that can facilitate your travel needs as well as your comfort at home. She also emphasizes the importance of discovering or rediscovering hobbies and personal interests; she gives cooking tips and nutrition care; and she writes of the importance of getting outdoors and walking, of moving around, and of building hobby crafts and using them. Rehabilitation is so important and the author discusses it in detail. The book takes you into the world of volunteering. And this is all discussed with the proper attention to concerns such as hygiene and avoiding crowds.

The book has a moderate number of typographical/grammatical errors. The cover is attractive and looks professional. There are a small number of illustrations and I think more illustrations would have benefited the book.

The author, Elaine Fantle Shimberg, is an award-winning medical writer. She has written books about depression, stroke, Tourette syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome, and chronic heartburn (gastroesophageal reflux). Ms Shimberg is chairman of the board of St Joseph's Baptist Hospitals, in Tampa Bay, Florida.

The author lists references wherever possible and/or pertinent to all key subject matter, as well as support groups, airline contacts, and many more information pieces useful to COPD patients. At the end of the book is an extensive list of resources, suggested readings, and a list of COPD-related words to know.

In conclusion I wish to express my thanks to Bonnie Steele RN PhD, of Seattle Veterans Hospital, for inviting me to participate in this project and to the staff of RESPIRATORY CARE journal.

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