



European Lung Foundation

“THE PUBLIC VOICE OF OUR SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY”

The ELF itself

The European Lung Foundation (ELF) acts as our Society's conduit to patients and the public at large, as well as fulfilling various other roles within the Society. In 2007, the Foundation made progress, often rapidly, on a range of fronts. It also gained a new leader, as Kai-Håkon Carlsen took over from Laurent Nicod as ELF Chair.

The ELF and the public

The ELF interacts with the public through its website, its publications and its annual lung function testing event. It also builds links with other lung health organisations.

The website

In January 2007, the ELF website was available in 6 European languages and welcomed approximately 700 visitors each day. By December, 2 further languages, Russian and Greek, had been added and almost 1,500 people were visiting the site every day, from more than 100 countries over the course of each month.

The site contains a huge range of content, including:

- regularly updated news stories;
- monthly updates on research published in the *European Respiratory Journal*;
- information on lung diseases, health and risk factors;
- a growing collection of links, reviewed by experts, to relevant websites.

The factsheets

One of the ELF's main public outputs is its range of patient factsheets, which are published in the ERS School publication *Breathe* and on the ELF website. In 2007, a further 5 factsheets were added to the collection: “Diet and the lungs”; “Dirty air and the lungs” (for children); “Pulmonary arterial hypertension”; “Indoor air pollution and the lungs”; and “Pneumonia”.

“Testa dina lungor” in Stockholm

The public lung function testing event was introduced by Kjell Larsson in 2002 and was also originally held in Stockholm. Since then, the ELF and the ERS have organised a spirometry event at each Congress. In 2007, the Congress Chairs and ELF decided to occupy a superb location in the main hall of Stockholm's central railway station. This ensured a more-than-steady flow of visitors over 2 days, and thanks to a team of more than 50 doctors and nurses, it was possible to test the lungs of 2,882 members of the public.

Those who produced abnormal measurements were given explanatory letters to pass on to their GP, as well as further advice and smoking cessation assistance if needed.

The event garnered a huge amount of press coverage, thanks to a major PR campaign and the efforts of the Congress Chairs. Thanks should also go to: the local



A bustling atmosphere: the 2007 spirometry event at the Stockholm station

groups that assisted in the event and the surrounding campaign; Boehringer Ingelheim, for funding; and ndd Medizintechnik, who provided spirometers for the event.

Working with other foundations

In 2007, the ELF made patient materials available to societies in Switzerland and Cyprus. It also held a meeting with representatives of several European lung organisations to discuss further collaborations. Although progress is gradual, it is hoped that such links will be strengthened in the coming years.

ELF and research Recognising achievement

Each year, the ELF Award honours an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the service of human health. In 2007, the award was presented to Professor Bert Brunekreef, in recognition of his commitment to lung health and environmental protection.

Professor Brunekreef's work on the health effects of air pollution has been both groundbreaking and influential. His evidence on the link between damp homes and childhood asthma has stimulated research worldwide, while his studies on fine particulate pollution lie at the root of major legislation in this area. Professor Brunekreef has also played a major role in educating the scientists of the future: at the time of the award ceremony, he had supervised 27 scientists through their doctoral studies.

Research development

In 2007, the ELF supported 3 ERS fellowships. By offering such support to researchers, the ELF hopes to help generate greater respiratory knowledge, to the benefit of society at large and future generations. For

26



"The ELF's role as the arm of the ERS that reaches out to patients with lung disease and patient organisations has developed further during 2007. Our Foundation has added to the factsheets it produces about lung diseases, and these have become an important source of information for patients. The factsheets are available on the ELF website in several languages. The website itself, which also contains research updates and news, is growing in popularity and was used by 1,500 visitors daily at the end of 2007, representing more than 100 countries each month. Finally, it gives me great pleasure to report that the annual spirometry event, which took place during the ERS Stockholm Congress, was a huge success, reaching out to more members of the public than ever before."

Kai-Håkon Carlsen, European Lung Foundation Chair

Speaking up in Brussels

As part of the ELF's mission to "help current and future generations of European citizens to breathe more easily", the Foundation takes a keen interest in political developments. In 2007, the ELF worked with the ERS and the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients Associations (EFA) to produce a leaflet and generate publicity for an event at the European Parliament to highlight the burden of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in Europe.

Towards the end of 2007, ELF staff also began to assist the ERS in creating a public-facing website for the EvA project, a major European clinical research effort.

more details about Fellowships and awardees, please see page 15.

ELF in the future

In 2008, the ELF will continue to expand and improve its activities. The website will be developed further to include new topics, factsheets and a database of information for travellers. A public awareness event is also planned to coincide with the 2008 ERS Congress in Berlin. It promises to raise the bar once again in terms of quality and scale.

The ELF also has another of its original aims to fulfil: that of raising funds to support ERS research and educational activities. Moves are under way to make it easier and more attractive to donate money to the Foundation.

Looking further ahead, the ELF plans to build on its links with national foundations and to become more deeply involved in European advocacy, establishing a greater presence in Brussels. Also on the horizon is a return to one of the ELF's formative projects: the *European Lung White Book*, which is due to be comprehensively revised. ELF will be involved, once again, in making this project accessible to the public.

ELF Council

Chair: Kai-Håkon Carlsen.

Council members: James Y. Paton, Sylvia Hartl, William MacNee, Monica Fletcher, Jean Bousquet, Bernard Fierens, Ineta Grisle.

Advisory Board: Niels Chavannes, Hilary Pinnock, Claudia Steurer-Stey, Monica Fletcher, Elise Austegard, Carmen Hernandez.