A guide to running a World Spirometry Day event

The aim of this document is to give guidance and advice on organising a public event as part of the Healthy Lungs for Life campaign. Here, the European Lung Foundation (ELF) shares its experience of what is necessary to run a successful spirometry testing event, and covers the other types of events you may wish to organise.

A range of useful resources is available for you to use in the Healthy Lungs for Life toolkit (www.healthylungsforlife.org/get-involved/toolkit) to help you to join us in highlighting the importance of lung health throughout life.

Introduction to Healthy Lungs for Life

Healthy Lungs for Life, which incorporates World Spirometry Day, aims to be the largest ever global lung health awareness campaign. Running every year with a different theme, it will focus on prevention and education, with the aim of reducing the burden of lung disease.

The Healthy Lungs for Life 2014 theme will be “Breathe clean air”, with the initiative officially launching at the European Respiratory Society (ERS) International Congress in Munich from 6–10 September 2014. Activities will take place at the Congress centre and in the city, and will be rolled out across the globe.

Why support Healthy Lungs for Life?

The aim of Healthy Lungs for Life 2014 is to encourage people of all ages to learn about the importance of clean air for maintaining healthy lungs. Members of the public will also be informed about spirometry as an easy and non-invasive means to assess their lung health.

As a stakeholder in lung health, we need your help to ensure that the messages of the campaign are heard around the world.

How can you get involved?

Please join the Healthy Lungs for Life campaign by holding a World Spirometry Day testing or training event. You are encouraged to hold an event at a time that works for you, in your hospital or surgery, or in a public place during the month of September and beyond.

Please visit the “Inspiration” page on our website for ideas.
Promoting an event

Any PR activities should focus on promoting the event to local residents to encourage them to attend.

Some examples of effective PR activities include:

• Contacting local press, radio and TV, and providing information on the event itself and also on lung diseases, and in 2014 on the importance of breathing clean air
• Sending promotional posters and flyers to nearby doctors surgeries and making them available in waiting areas
• Advertising your event in local free newspapers
• Inviting local journalists to get their lungs tested
• Using social media to spread the word about your event. The official Healthy Lungs for Life 2014 hashtag is #BreatheCleanAir

Examples of all the above materials can be found in the PR pack (www.healthylungsforlife.org/get-involved/toolkit).

How much will it cost to run a spirometry event?

Holding a spirometry event need not have high costs. For an event in a GP surgery or hospital you will only need basic signage, flyers and posters. You may also wish to mail local GPs and/or contact the local media to raise awareness of your event.

Equipment already available should be used and controlled by appropriately trained staff who usually perform these tests, to ensure the tests are carried out safely and correctly. Sponsorship may be needed for additional equipment and staff, if necessary.

A larger event to reach greater numbers and attract media interest will require more resources and support. A local PR agency can be used to organise cooperation with local TV and radio as well as running a small press conference if there is enough interest from local journalists. Previous ERS/ELF spirometry events have worked on a 40:60 (PR: logistics) budget split.

If you need to seek sponsorship, it is best if this comes in the form of an unrestricted grant from a company with an interest in promoting awareness of lung diseases and lung health.

The funds given should hold no restriction on the event and any agreement made with a sponsor should ensure that no input in the running of the event is permitted. In return there should be acknowledgement of their support by the use of their logo in posters and press material.
What do you need to run a spirometry event?

- Spirometers
- Mouth pieces
- Tissues
- Printers, or something to write the results on
- Furniture (chairs and tables)
- Patient information leaflets
- Referral letters
- Posters
- Signage
- Water and cups
- Waste baskets

You may wish to provide all staff with t-shirts and a name badge to make them stand out from people coming to have their lung function tested.

You can have your own T-shirts made using the design found in the signage and promotional items pack available on the Healthy Lungs for Life website (www.healthylungsforlife.org/get-involved/toolkit).

Staff

Staff who should be considered to run an event include:

- **An event organiser** to work with the doctors and nurses before and during the event
- **A welcome team** to explain the process, hand out questionnaires, organise a queuing system and to distribute leaflets in the local area
- ** Appropriately trained nurses/physiologists/technologists/doctors** to carry out the tests. Ensure that you have enough staff to allow for breaks. Each test should take approximately 10 minutes, based on a patient performing three blows
- **Doctors** to give immediate advice to those with restricted airflow or those who wish to quit smoking
- **Smoking cessation support groups** to advise patients in the waiting area

Information for the public

A spirometry event provides a unique opportunity to educate members of the public while they are waiting to have their lungs tested. A range of reading material on clean air and lung diseases is available on the Healthy Lungs for Life site if you don’t have your own.

Many patient organisations may have relevant material available, as well as staff who can attend the event.

You can look at the list of patient organisations throughout Europe listed on the ELF website to find out if there is a group near you that you could work with on an event (www.europeanlung.org/en/get-involved/european-patient-organisation-network).
How should testing be performed?

A training session and full guidelines on how to use all spirometers should be conducted before the event. Please refer to the standards document, ‘Diagnostic Spirometry in Primary Care’: www.thepcrj.org/journ/vol18/18_3_130_147.pdf

• If using questionnaires there should be a link (ID number) between the questionnaire and the spirometry test.
• Patient safety checks should be made regarding contraindications and all spirometry should be performed with the patient sitting down.
• Three acceptable blows (if possible) should be performed by each person in accordance with ERS/American Thoracic Society (ATS) Standards 2005 (erj.ersjournals.com/content/26/2/319.full).
• The Global Lung Function Initiative provides information on the first global multi-ethnic reference equations for spirometry (www.lungfunction.org).
• A printout or written results should be handed to the person and any problems should be explained.
• Those showing an abnormal spirometry result (abnormal curves or values) or people who have symptoms and are worried should be given a letter to take to their healthcare provider.
• People should also be given the opportunity to speak to a doctor onsite, if possible.
• If children have abnormal values, letters to their healthcare provider should be given to the child in the presence of the parent/guardian.

Please be clear to participants that, as this is a screening event under non-perfect testing conditions, a diagnosis cannot be definitively given.

ERS European Spirometry Driving Licence

We strongly encourage anyone organising a spirometry event to take the European Spirometry Driving Licence (ESDL).

The ESDL provides a standardised qualification in spirometry to increase standards in training, testing and diagnosis of people with lung diseases.

Find out more: hermes.ersnet.org/spirometry

Dealing with abnormal results and other health issues

A letter should be given to anyone with unusual results. This should be addressed to their healthcare provider to request a confirmation of the findings and to advise further investigation.

An example of this letter can be found in the correspondence pack available on the Healthy Lungs for Life website (www.healthylungsforlife.org/get-involved/toolkit).

If someone is a smoker and concerned about their lung health, introduce them to a smoking cessation expert onsite or give them contact details for a local smoking cessation group.
Ethical issues

Depending on the rules in each country, approval from the regional/national medical ethics committee may be needed before the event takes place. In some countries, approval may also be needed from national data authorities if the results are going to be stored. Staff may also need to ensure that they have additional liability cover to perform spirometry outside the hospital environment. It is up to organisers and participating staff to find this out as soon as possible to avoid cancellation or undue risk to their jobs at these events.

General information

- Staff at the event should be advised to leave bags in a safe place and avoid bringing coats and personal belongings if at all possible.
- Encourage everyone to arrive in good time.
- The event organiser should be informed of the arrival of all staff to ensure appropriate people are manning each area.
- Staff should be advised to pick up specific clothing (if used) and pick up a name/title badge.
- A water cooler and cups should be made available for patients and staff. Its location should be indicated to staff and they should be requested to inform the appropriate person if the water runs out.
- Directions to the nearest toilet should be given.
- Details on food provided (if any) should be given.
- Information should be provided on what to do if someone is taken ill.

Sharing your success

To measure the impact of World Spirometry Day and Healthy Lungs for Life, ELF and ERS will be collecting data on each event. The Healthy Lungs for Life team will issue a survey after the event to collect information on key metrics. To complete this survey, you will need to collect data on:

- The type of event conducted (i.e. training, testing, patient information session, kid’s event, etc.) and the number of attendees
- Number of spirometry tests completed and scores
- Media coverage: number of cuttings and copies of articles, and social media activity: increase in followers, number of comments

Be part of the wider Healthy Lungs for Life movement

Healthy Lungs for Life aims to stretch further than World Spirometry Day itself. The campaign will also be presented to the European Parliament later this year. To ensure that the impact of Healthy Lungs for Life is as big as possible at this event, and to help us get the support of as many MEPs as possible, we need your help.

We want to show MEPs how many people are behind the messages of Healthy Lungs for Life to get them to back our campaign and support policies and legislation that protect lung health. You can strengthen this by taking a photo of yourself or someone else blowing up a balloon. We want to collect as many of these photos as possible to use in Brussels later this year.

You can also send us general photos from your event, and remember that it is better if the photos are high quality. Please get permission from people before you take their photo. Any images sent to us could be used by ELF/ERS for publicity purposes in connection with this or future lung health awareness campaigns.
Other types of event

In addition to spirometry testing and training, ELF and ERS will be holding other types of public events during and around the ERS Congress in Munich. You may like to organise one of these in your own area as well as, or instead of, a spirometry event.

Patient/expert evenings

These informal sessions aim to connect the general public and patients with experts so that they can learn more about the impact of air on the health of our lungs and the benefit of clean air for people who live with lung disease.

The outlines of these events will be available on the Healthy Lungs for Life website, as well as the slides from them.

Children’s competition

In conjunction with the Mini Munich holiday scheme, which involves around 2,000 children, we will be holding a Healthy Lungs for Life kid’s competition. Children will learn about and consider the impact of clean air on lung health and, with the support of animation and illustration experts, will make short animated films on the theme. The winning film will be shown at the ERS Congress opening ceremony.

ELF’s lung health factsheet for children, ‘Dirty air and the lungs’, is available to download in the patient information toolkit on the Healthy Lungs for Life website.

With thanks to the Healthy Lungs for Life partners