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I love you with all my lungs:
On Communicating Effectively and Positively about Lung Health

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Text: The respiratory community is slowly but progressively learning effective communication strategies for promoting positive messages on lung health.[1,2] Implementation research, or the systematic study of methods that support the application of research findings and other evidence-based knowledge into policy and practice,[3] has been ill-used in noncommunicable diseases (NCD),[4] particularly in chronic respiratory diseases (CRD).[5] It is time to change that, as lung health is a fundamental component of overall well-being; and there cannot be health without lung health.[6] After all, the Vital Capacity obtained by spirometry is "vital", because its impairment is a strong predictor of mortality in otherwise healthy individuals.[7] Communicating effectively about lung health is essential for raising awareness, promoting preventive behaviours, and fostering positive attitudes toward respiratory well-being.

In this viewpoint, we explore effective strategies to communicate positive messages on lung health, when addressing the broader community.[8] Drawing on insights from the development of health campaigns in general, from the pharma industry, and even from the dark side, namely tobacco manufacturers and their allies (who actually invented marketing),[9] we highlight key principles and best practices for effective communication in respiratory medicine.

We need to understand the importance of positive messages.[10] For decades, COPD was considered a disease defined by the triad of an older male who smokes; and patients with COPD and their relatives felt a shared sense of guilt that in certain cases involved their doctors.[11] Fortunately, this is changing, and COPD is now considered a

preventable, treatable disease;[12] and smoking with nicotine addiction is defined as a disease by WHO, with code F17 in the ICD-10-CM (International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision, Clinical Modification), and with further specific codes related to tobacco use and exposure (Z72.0 Tobacco use; Z72.1 Tobacco dependence; and Z72.9 Tobacco use, unspecified). These are typically used in conjunction with codes for specific tobacco-related diseases or conditions, such as COPD (J44.9), lung cancer (C34.90), and cardiovascular diseases (I25.10), although we now understand that each of these diseases is associated with many risk factors in addition to tobacco.

Positive, effective communication about lung health requires a shift from fear-based messaging focused solely on the risks and consequences of respiratory diseases, to a positive approach emphasizing the benefits of promoting lung health and quality of life. Positive messages can motivate individuals to adopt healthy behaviours, seek timely medical care, and take proactive measures to protect their respiratory health.[13] It has been shown that emotion is the main component that leads to action; of all emotions, sadly, fear is the one that is thought to have the largest impact on health behaviours. However, over stressing fear can be counter-productive, leading individuals to feel overwhelmed,[14] and the targets of scaremongering. Research shows that approaches that focus on the benefits often lead to more stable changes in behaviour.[15] By highlighting success stories, encouraging positive self-perceptions, and promoting a sense of empowerment, positive messaging can inspire hope and resilience among patients and the community. Several strategies for effective communication in lung health and CRDs are listed in the **Table**. Overall, advances in communication strategies, engineering, and other fields can be successfully

implemented in this context [16,17] Moreover, lessons from the pharmaceutical industry highlight the importance of critically evaluating communication tactics and ethical considerations in health promotion efforts.[18] Strategies employed by Pharma, such as targeted marketing, strengthening of scientific evidence, support by influencers and key opinion leaders, and using persuasive messaging to promote products with health effects, underscore the need for transparency, accountability, and ethical integrity in health communication practices. Partnering with Pharma to raise the profile of CRDs, such as the International Respiratory Coalition,[19] is a major step forward.

New technologies make it possible to tailor messages to the individual based on demographics, health conditions, or habits. Communicating personal, bespoke health messages and text messaging to individuals can improve their lung health. It is even possible to gamify this messaging,[20] as has been done to a certain extent with heart and sleep health by the adoption of wearable technology. Further partnerships with device manufacturers or software providers could reach large audiences and remain relevant in daily activities.

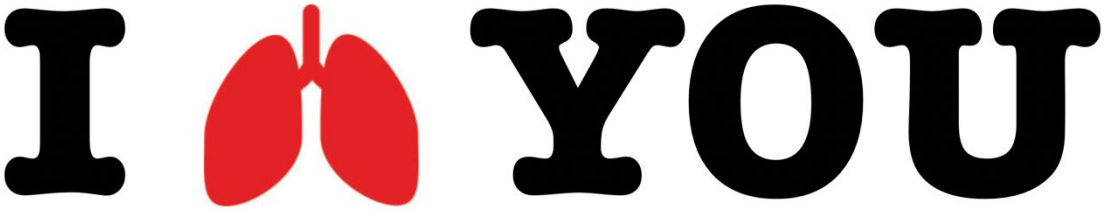
Broad campaigns could disseminate messages that focus the public attention on lung health. Thinking out of the box, should it be nice to write poems with “-I lung you” (**Figure**) instead of its cardiac-biased original?; or be moved by listening in radio rhythms as ”- I love you with all my lungs …”? Slogans that include “I breathe you” or “How are you breathing today?” could, if reaching millions, generate unprecedented awareness. To dream with your lungs is the first step to promoting lung health everywhere.

To conclude, effective evidence-based communication is a powerful tool for promoting positive messages on lung health, empowering individuals, and mobilizing communities to prioritize respiratory well-being. We can foster a culture of respiratory health literacy, resilience, and advocacy by leveraging educational, storytelling, multimedia, and community engagement strategies.[21] Together, let's aim to communicate effectively and positively to inspire change and improve lung health for all. Lungly yours…

Table. Strategies for effective communication in lung health and CRDs

Empowerment through Education: Provide accurate, accessible, and culturally sensitive information about lung health campaigns, to emphasize the importance of early detection, symptom recognition, and preventive measures such as smoking cessation, vaccination, and environmental control.
Storytelling and Personal Narratives: Promote real-life stories that will resonate deeply with audiences, humanizing the impact of respiratory diseases and inspiring positive action. Share experiences of individuals who have successfully managed their lung conditions, or adopted healthier lifestyles.
Multimedia and Digital Platforms: Leverage digital platforms, including social media, videos, infographics, tailored text messaging and mobile applications, spreading lung health messages. Create interactive tools, virtual support groups, and online resources to foster dialogue, peer support, and behaviour change.
Community Engagement and Partnerships: Engage communities, stakeholders, and grassroots organizations to promote lung health. Organize community-based initiatives, outreach events, partnering with schools, workplaces, and faith-based organizations.
Cultural Sensitivity and Health Equity: Design inclusive communication strategies that recognize cultural beliefs, values, and socio-economic factors. Develop culturally sensitive messages, appropriate language translations, and targeted outreach efforts that reduce disparities and promote lung health equity.

Figure: I lung you



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