

On our cover this month is a color-enhanced X-ray of the chest of an 83-year-old man, showing signs of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), the third leading cause of death in the United States. The X-ray shows both the extent of lung fibrosis (yellow) and the emphysema that results once the alveoli are damaged (red). Based on an analysis from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Lung Association

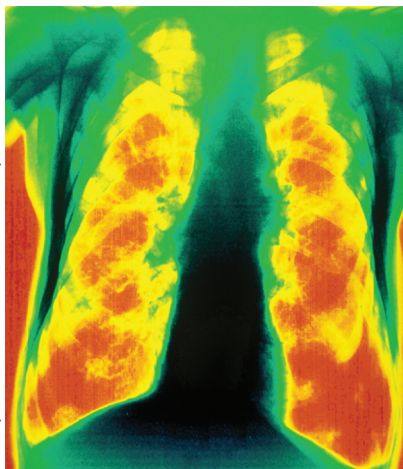


Photo by Scott Camazine / Science Photo Library.

(ALA) estimates that more than 13 million American adults have the disease.

According to the ALA, smoking is the primary risk factor for COPD and the cause of approximately 85% to 90% of COPD deaths. Other risk factors include exposure to air pollution, secondhand smoke, and occupational dusts and chemicals; heredity; and a history of childhood respiratory infections. Smokers are about 12 to 13 times more likely to die from COPD than nonsmokers, and for eight consecutive years more women than men have died from COPD.

The cost of COPD is high, both to the health care system and to those with the disease. A recent ALA survey found that half of all COPD patients say their condition hampers their ability to work. They also report restrictions in regular physical activity, household chores, sleeping, and family and social activities.

To learn about exacerbations of COPD, which are characterized by an increased severity of symptoms, and both increase the risk of death from COPD and reduce the patient's quality of life, see "COPD Exacerbations" in this issue.—*Michael Ferguson, senior editorial coordinator* ▼

On the Web

AJN's Web site, www.ajnonline.com, offers access to current and past issues (from 1900 on), podcasts, article collections, news alerts—and much more. Bookmark our blog, Off the Charts (<http://ajnoffthecharts.com>), to read frequent updates and share your thoughts on what you see in your nursing world. Join us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/AJNfans), follow us on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/AmJNurs>), and be sure to download the new AJN app on your iPad.

WHAT WE'RE BLOGGING ABOUT

- Donna Sabella, a mental health nurse and AJN contributing editor, provides resources and information on grief, mental illness, and posttraumatic stress disorder in "A Mental Health Nurse's Perspective on Newtown and Its Aftermath" (<http://wp.me/prthD-3sY>).
- Behind on your blog reading? Check out "Top 10 New AJN Posts of 2012" for the most popular posts of this past year (<http://wp.me/prthD-3sh>).
- Read "Kassandra Perkins, Domestic Violence, and the Senseless Search for a Reasonable Explanation" by AJN clinical managing editor Karen Roush for a passionate post on why there's nothing surprising about the latest high-profile domestic violence case, plus what nurses can do (<http://wp.me/prthD-3rC>).

WHAT READERS ARE SAYING ON TWITTER, FACEBOOK, AND OUR BLOG

"There are many male victims of domestic abuse, and the abuser is not always—perhaps not usually—a wife or girlfriend." **"I've been in Healthcare IT for over 25 years and no matter what system you have you can't stop the users from clicking on the wrong patient."** "I, myself, like the 12-hour shifts. Continuity with patient care is a plus and working the 3/12s in a row is pretty nice. . . . I feel more organized and less rushed to finish up my day."

FEBRUARY PODCASTS

- **Monthly highlights:** Listen to AJN editors discuss the contents of the February issue. 🔦
- **Behind the article:** Editor-in-chief Shawn Kennedy speaks with
 - Lisa Carney Anderson and Kathleen Fagerlund, authors of a two-part series on perioperative medication withholding in patients with Parkinson's disease. 🔦
 - Rebecca Matthews and Andrea Moore, authors of the *In Our Community* article, "Babies Are Still Dying of SIDS," along with Matthews's husband (and Moore's pediatrician), David Matthews. 🔦 ▼