



Easing the symptoms of chronic lung disease

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28 May 2007. People suffering from chronic lung problems are being asked to volunteer for two new studies conducted at The University of Auckland.

The studies are looking at both new medication and a novel delivery method for existing treatments of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD).

COPD is a chronic lung disease which causes restriction of the airways and is usually caused by smoking and other airborne irritants. It includes conditions such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis, and results in shortness of breath, wheezing and a persistent cough.

The first study is looking at a new 'bronchodilator' treatment which works by relaxing the muscles around the bronchi, or breathing tubes, in the lungs providing relief of symptoms and help to make breathing easier. Volunteers will need to attend up to 13 sessions at an Auckland clinic over an annual period.

The second study is comparing a new and an existing inhaler and their effectiveness in delivering a commonly prescribed COPD medication. Volunteers will be required to attend sessions at clinics in Auckland, Hamilton, Dunedin, Wellington or Tauranga over a twelve week period.

"COPD is a serious disease, particularly in the older section of the population," says Associate Professor Peter Black of the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences. "Around 5% of the population have COPD although it affects a much higher proportion of those over 60 years old. Up to half of people who have symptoms due to COPD may not have been diagnosed with the condition or have received treatment for it. Although there is no cure for the disease these studies are looking at the best way to treat patient symptoms."

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