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CHEST 2009, Session ID 3272, Nov 4, 2009, 2:15pm – 3:15pm  
Catastrophic Dyspnea at the End of Life

Presentation Title: Assessment and Coordination of Care for Patients with Dyspnea

#### Bulleted Summary

- Definition of Dyspnea
- Definition of Dyspnea Crisis
- Who is at risk for Dyspnea Crisis
- Review of Measurement Tools
- Coordination of Care components:
  - Plan of care – examples
  - Family/caregiver involvement
  - Communication among health care professionals, patients, caregivers and community agencies
  - Utilization of resources
- Conclusion & Discussion

### Interactive Session Questions:

1. A 62 year old woman was recently diagnosed with moderate COPD when she presented with acute bronchitis. Smoking history = 40 pack year history, quit last month when she received diagnosis. Symptoms include dyspnea upon exertion e.g. climbing stairs and making the bed, but usually not at rest. Non-productive cough. SaO<sub>2</sub> = 94% at rest, no desaturation with exertion.

Is this patient at risk for a Dyspnea Crisis? Yes or No

2. A patient with advanced lung cancer is being cared at home by his wife and home care nurses. He receives regular treatment with morphine for pain and dyspnea symptoms. As a result, he experiences intermittent cognitive impairment making it difficult to assess his severity of dyspnea. How would you advise his wife to assess his dyspnea?
  - a. Use a visual analog scale and have him point to the number that represents the intensity level of his dyspnea
  - b. Verbally ask him "How short of breath are you?"
  - c. Count his respirations
  - d. Observe his facial expressions using a tool for interpretation
3. You are responsible for teaching the educational sessions in a pulmonary rehabilitation program (breathing techniques, dyspnea reduction strategies, management of acute exacerbations, etc.) As part of your class you discuss specific actions the patient and caregiver should take if their symptoms become worse.

In a group setting, how would you tailor this action plan to the individual patient's goals of care?

- a. You wouldn't since there is inadequate time in a group setting
- b. You wouldn't because it is not your responsibility to discuss specific goals of care
- c. You would recommend the patient review the plan with their clinicians and caregivers
- d. You would ask the patient if they have advanced directives and if so, follow those directives.