

FRESH AIR Uganda Study

Free Respiratory Evaluation and Smoke-exposure reduction by primary Health cAre Integrated gRoups

Letter no 2

The two presentations, “The feasibility of a prevalence and burden of COPD survey in a rural area of Uganda” and “Survey on the prevalence of COPD and its risk factors in a rural area of Uganda” during the IPCRG Scientific Meeting end of May in Amsterdam, have been successful. The enthusiasm of the IPCRG members is high.

During the pilot survey we found out

- (a) The burden of respiratory symptoms in the district of Masindi is high. Biomass fuel use and tobacco smoking are major contributing factors of respiratory symptoms to men, women and children, which include chronic cough, sputum production, shortness of breath, wheeze and pneumonia.
- (b) The knowledge of chronic respiratory diseases (CRD) is poor. A major priority is to increase the knowledge of CRD and awareness of physicians and other healthcare workers about health effects of tobacco smoking and biomass fuel smoke.
- (c) By putting trained nurses, health officers and primary care physicians, working at the different health centers, we can develop country-specific approaches, dealing with cultural differences and local beliefs on biomass fuel use, tobacco smoke, and COPD. They know the healthcare system and its limitations, and they understand the local tradition. They are often capable to communicate with the different tribes as they speak their language.

There are several ideas how we can go on with the Fresh Air Survey.