
Preface

This book is written as a resource for nurses and other health professionals caring for patients with COPD. Even though there are some 900000 people diagnosed with COPD in the UK, the disease is still regarded as a Cinderella disorder and incites a negative image.

In this book, we explore the impact that COPD has on patients and their families and how we as professionals can help them to cope and improve their quality of life. It begins with an overview of the disease, symptoms, spirometry screening and clinical assessment of COPD. Alternatives to hospital management for acute exacerbations of COPD, such as ‘Hospital at Home’ schemes and their benefits are discussed. Medical intervention is only one approach to the management of COPD. A chapter is devoted to maximising the patient’s quality of life in spite of his or her pulmonary limitations. The last chapter discusses end-of-life issues.

Since working as a COPD Nurse Specialist in primary care I have acquired a new understanding of the needs of patients with COPD as well as the support required of their carers. My role has enabled me to help patients who live a very frightening existence, to cope with their symptoms and make an impact on their quality of life. Caring for patients with COPD is both challenging and rewarding and I hope that I can pass on this experience to the readers to enable you to deliver the best possible care to your patients.

