

Medical Mystery Baffles Physicians

An unsolved medical mystery is challenging and frustrating some of the brightest medical minds at Bergendorst Medical Center in Greenville, Iowa. Morbidly obese 58 year old Stanley Green suffers from uncontrolled diabetes, severe emphysema, degenerative arthritis of the knees, disabling peripheral vascular disease and chronic congestive heart failure.

In spite of this impressive list of medical problems, Mr. Green knows none of these conditions are a factor.



“I have been to multiple specialists and no one has provided a satisfactory answer why I am so short of breath. I can barely make it across the room without getting winded. The doctors keep pointing to my emphysema, my heart failure and so forth. But it is the same old song and dance, ” explained Mr. Green.

“I know these aren’t the cause of my breathing troubles. All the doctors want to do is push more medicines but I don’t like medicines because they contain unnatural chemicals which are bad for your health.”

Mr. Green’s pulmonologist Bill Staverson, MD is particularly puzzled by the case. “We have tested Mr. Green out the wazoo, literally, and still can’t get this nailed down. We simply cannot figure out why he is short of breath, particularly with exertion.”

Mr. Green started smoking at age 13 and currently consumes 2 packs of cigarettes every day. “He has horrible emphysema, his lungs look like swiss cheese on CT scan and his pulmonary function tests are atrocious,” Dr. Staverson observes. “But Stanley is adamant his emphysema isn’t a factor because he has smoked forever and it never caused a problem before. How can one argue with

that kind of insight and logic?"

Maria Chavez, MD is a Harvard trained specialist who serves as Chief of Cardiology at Bergendorst Medical Center. She has reviewed Mr. Green's case and is equally puzzled.

"Mr. Green has critical multi-vessel coronary artery disease and so far has declined intervention. He wants answers to his breathing troubles before letting us "tinker" with his heart." Unfortunately no one on the medical staff has found a convincing explanation for the breathing trouble.

Mr. Green's diet largely consists of potato chips, Dr. Pepper and cigarettes, but this too I unrelated to his troubles. "I'm not big on the whole life style modification thing or chemical medications," stated Mr. Green. "But I might be more motivated to try if someone could first explain to me why I can't breath anymore."