



Dr Carol Gill and the Vivo 45 LS

A Person-Centered Ventilator Contributes to a Whole Life

Breas spoke with Dr. Carol Gill, Professor Emeritus, Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and previously a clinical psychologist and the director of rehabilitation psychology at a hospital in Los Angeles, California. She is busy as a wife and a grandmother who loves organic gardening and classic movies. Dr. Gill uses a Breas Vivo 45 LS ventilator under the direction of Dr. Lisa Wolfe with the home ventilation care provided by Health Care Solutions Group of Chicago.

As a child, Dr. Gill contracted polio and has lived with polio related disabilities for most of her life. A ventilator was not needed until she developed sleep apnea in middle age. After years of nocturnal ventilation, she realized the need for daytime ventilatory support to help with fatigue and airway clearance. She consulted with Dr. Wolfe and her home care provider and was recommended to try daytime use of Vivo 45 LS with the mouthpiece ventilation feature.

Dr. Gill's own experiences with disability clearly has prepared her for her life's work in disability studies that "focus on the complexity of disability."

"Everybody thinks they kind of know what disability is but it's a lot more than meets the eye. It's not just a physical or mental impairment inside of the person, inside of the individual. In disability studies, we look at disability as created by the interaction between the person and society. So disability studies scholars are interested in how people with disabilities have been categorized; how we've been treated as different from and often inferior to other people [when] we function or appear outside the norm. And we look at disability as more of a social status or even an identity which in many ways is analogous to gender, race, ethnic, and cultural identities. We're interested in the history, cultural values, and even political aspects

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of disability rather than just looking at the physiological part of things. ...We tend to view disability as an interesting and valid way of life rather than viewing it as pathological or something that always needs to be cured."

PERSON-CENTERED VENTILATION

To Dr. Gill the Vivo 45 LS falls into the category of "good ventilation." What makes for good ventilation? It "further(s) the goal of many people with disabilities to just live their lives to the fullest, ...under their own control and emphasizing the priorities that they have for what's important." "In my case, it's very important for me to be able to continue an active life ..." "Ventilation that is accessible, flexible, personal, usually used and moved about. That all is very compatible with the values we (in the disability community) have and our academic work."

Dr. Gill continues on about her experiences with the Vivo 45 LS,

"I like that it's small, lightweight. I like that it's quiet. You can take it to a library or a classroom and not have a disturbance. But for me, the biggest advantage over ventilators I've used in the past is it allows me to take breaths as I need them during the day. It allows me to do what I think is frequently referred to as breath stacking. I can stack my breath and that helps me tremendously with keeping all those little air sacs open in my lungs. It helps me cough because I can take a little breath and then another little breath on top of it and then I can lean forward and cough.

And it helps keep my lungs and my breathing physiology in great shape."

"With Vivo, I feel like it's there breathing with me. You know, we're on the same page. ...It's taking its cues from me and yet giving me what it's been programmed to do well. It has its expertise and I have mine."

Dr. Gill tells someone who is considering the Vivo 45 LS, "I believe they'll find that it facilitates their lifestyle. It's that they're going to have a much easier time incorporating it into their lifestyle than other options. I mean there are other small and lightweight vents but this one ... is the first one that seems to address all of the issues I've had."

In the short time using the Vivo 45 LS, Dr. Gill reports that her CO2 levels have gone down, and she feels more energetic. "My blood tests have shown that I'm doing better on expelling carbon dioxide. So my stats are getting better."



MESSAGE TO FUTURE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

At UIC, Dr. Gill has also served as an adjunct professor in the College of Medicine. Her message to medical students is that

“[W]e have a non-medical life which a lot of doctors and medical students don't realize. I mean, they don't really have enough contact with disabled people to realize that we do have an ordinary non-tragic life. And knowing that fact is part of what makes a physician culturally competent about disability. I like the concept of cultural competence that you see applied to race, gender, ethnicity, and culture. But you rarely see it applied

to disability. And yet there is a culture of disability that essentially says you can approach life differently. You can function differently but you're still completely human with all of the interests and goals and values of any human.

So getting that across to helping professionals, who may only see disabled people in clinical settings and don't get to see them as much in real life, is an important project or endeavor – to help professionals grasp the full reality of disabled people's lives.”

Breas is proud to partner with Dr. Wolfe and Health Care Solutions Group to help Dr. Gill live her life to its fullest.