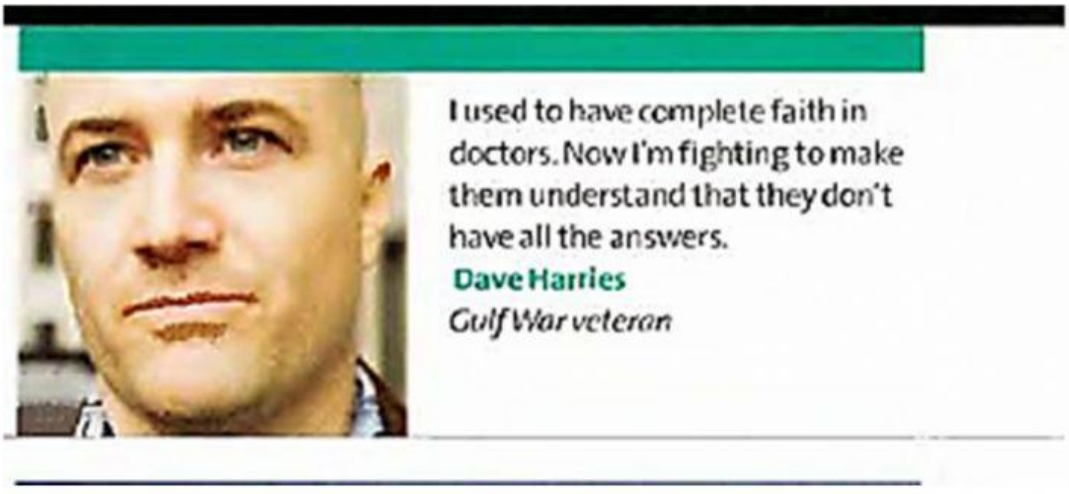
A helpline call

Listen to Sandy McGuire taking a call on the helpline. As you listen, fill in the information about the patient.

1	age of patient	☐			
2	wheezes	breathing in ☐		breathing out ☐	
3	coughs up blood	yes ☐		no ☐	
4	vomits	yes ☐		no ☐	
5	allergies	yes ☐		no ☐	
6	fever	yes ☐		no ☐	

Reading comprehension



LIVEWORKSHEETS

MYSTERY SYNDROMES



When you are ill, you expect your doctor to tell you what you have, and then to treat you. But sometimes people have symptoms whose cause is not understood, and for these people it can be difficult or impossible to get treatment.

The main symptom of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) is an overwhelming feeling of tiredness. The tiredness is so disabling that it is impossible for the sufferer to continue normal physical and mental activities. Other symptoms include muscle aches and pains, poor sleep, loss of appetite, a recurrent sore throat, and swollen glands in the neck. Sufferers often undergo many tests for known diseases, which prove negative, and many feel that doctors see them as hypochondriacs.

After the Gulf War of 1991, tens of thousands of ex-soldiers suffered chronic illnesses which doctors still cannot explain. Symptoms include dizziness, numbness in the arms, rashes, severe headaches, mood swings, and persistent, extreme tiredness. The cause remains a mystery, but the symptoms have been given the name Gulf War Syndrome. Some soldiers believe they may have been exposed to chemical weapons without knowing, and others blame the vaccinations they were given before they went to war. Military officials say that Gulf War Syndrome is not a real illness. There is no doubt the ex-soldiers are ill, they say, but their symptoms are simply the result of stress.

Maybe one day the cause of these syndromes will be known and will be treatable. But for people like ex-soldier Dave Harries, the first step is for their condition to be recognized by the medical profession. Then people will believe that their symptoms are not imaginary.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

2 Read the article and decide if the sentences are true (T) or false (F).

1 CFS is caused by a virus. _____
2 CFS sufferers cannot lead a normal life. _____
3 Some doctors believe they are not really ill. _____
4 Gulf War Syndrome sufferers were attacked with chemicals. _____
5 They were vaccinated against the syndrome. _____
6 The army officially says that stress caused their illness. _____

3 Tick (✓) the things that each syndrome affects.

	Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	Gulf War Syndrome
appetite		
arms		
head		
mood		
muscles		
neck		
skin		
sleep		
throat		

4 Work with a partner. Try to match the words without looking back at the text, then look back and check.

1	a recurrent	a	sleep
2	an overwhelming	b	glands
3	chronic	c	swings
4	loss of	d	aches and pains
5	mood	e	appetite
6	muscle	f	sore throat
7	poor	g	feeling of tiredness
8	swollen	h	illnesses

LIVEWORKSHEETS