

COPD QI Activity

The general practitioner plays a key role in the delivery and coordination of care for people with chronic disease, including COPD. Management of COPD in general practice during the current pandemic supports this vulnerable patient cohort and enhances viability for the practice, through the use of Medicare item numbers. Additionally, managing COPD patients during the winter months supports QI activity with the practice.

[The COPDX guidelines](#) support the current recommendations for managing COPD.

As the primary healthcare provider, the general practitioner (GP) is uniquely placed to identify smokers, provide support in quitting, diagnose COPD in its early stages and coordinate care as the disease progresses (Johnston 2011).

Identify Smokers:

While smoking cessation has long been known to reduce the rate of decline of lung function there is evidence it also has short-term benefits on lung function and quality of life. Smoking cessation is the most important intervention to prevent disease progression of COPD.

Activity:

1. Using Cat4, [Identify all patients without a smoking status recorded over the age of 35yrs.](#) (note – age difference in this recipe. Use 35yrs as recommended for identifying at risk COPD)
2. Using Cat4, [Record smoking status in patients with a respiratory condition.](#)

Resources: [RACGP Support Smoking Cessation](#)

Diagnose COPD in early stages

Diagnosis of COPD should be accompanied by regular assessment of severity [evidence level III-2, strong recommendation] Spirometry is the most reproducible, standardised and objective way of measuring airflow limitation, and FEV1 is the variable most closely associated with prognosis (Peto 1983).

Covid-19 has altered current guidelines in performing spirometry. To review the latest recommendations see [here](#).

[Spirometry in clinical practice](#)

Activity:

1. Identify all patients with COPD who have not had spirometry recorded. Consider recalling for review. To utilise spirometry MBS item number refer to [MBS](#) for guidelines.

Management

Nurses play an integral role in the assessment and delivery of education and management for people living with COPD. Nurses can identify patients and support planned proactive care with the patients GP.

Activity and Resources

Using the clinical audit tool (CAT4) or clinical software, in creating the following.

1. Create a register of all COPD patients
2. Ensure all patients are offered a CDM plan. To identify patients without a current GPMP/TCA
3. Review immunisation status and ensure all patients are offered current recommended influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations. Patients may source their immunisations from different providers. To check a patient's immunisation history, refer to Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) which can be accessed via HPOS using your PRODA account.
4. Ensure all COPD patients have an up to date action plan. The Action Plan should be completed by the clinician and patient together and guides the patient in recognising when their symptoms change and what action to take. [Action plan kit](#)
5. Consider a medication review and medication technique advice. Medication management and [Inhaler technique resource](#) which can support nurse education to the patient. Medication reviews are a useful way to support patient education on current medications and offer medication safety by minimising risk. For CAT4 recipe on patients eligible for medication review, [Identify all active patients with at least one chronic condition who are eligible for a Medication Review](#). Current advice on medication as advised by the Lung Foundation is in - [Stepwise management of COPD](#)
6. Pulmonary rehabilitation is a highly effective 6-8 week evidence-based exercise and education program that teaches people with a lung disease the skills they need to manage their breathlessness and stay well and out of hospital. Local Pulmonary rehabilitation providers can be located on HealthPathways.

[Central Queensland HealthPathways](#)
[Wide Bay HealthPathways](#)
[Sunshine Coast HealthPathways](#)

Further information on COPD management and resources:

[Lung Foundation](#)

[Lung Foundation Primary Healthcare toolkit](#)