

# Troublesome dyspnea during sexual activity is common in COPD patients

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Troublesome dyspnea that limits sexual activity is common among older patients with COPD, according to a new study from Denmark.

"We compared measures of well-being, depression and sexual function among older patients with severe COPD or heart failure, both of which are associated with dyspnea during exertion," said Ejvind Frausing Hansen, MD, chief physician at Hvidovre Hospital in Denmark. "A significantly higher percentage of COPD patients than heart failure patients reported having troublesome dyspnea during sexual activity."

"Dyspnea at exertion can also limit daily activities and increase the risk of poor well-being, [social isolation](#), and depression," Dr. Hansen continued. "Indeed, we found high levels of reported depression and poor well-being among both COPD and heart failure patients." The results will be presented at the ATS 2012 International Conference in San Francisco.

The researchers developed a self-administered questionnaire that included the World Health Organization-Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5), the [Beck Depression Inventory](#), and questions about sexual function. The questionnaire was completed by 39 COPD patients (mean age of 66) and 22 [patients with heart failure](#) (mean age of 64).

Troublesome dyspnea during sexual activity was reported by 44% of COPD patients, compared with 5% of heart failure patients. Dyspnea was reported to be a limiting factor for sexual activity by 56% of COPD

patients and 27% of heart failure patients. Similar percentages of COPD and [heart failure](#) patients reported an inadequate or very inadequate sex life (38% vs. 32%), signs of depression (34% vs. 37%), and poor well-being (33% vs. 32%).

"An adequate sexual life is important also for elderly people, and this topic has gained very little focus in research, compared to the research in other measures of well-being," said Dr. Hansen.

"Patients with COPD are known to have a high prevalence of sexual problems," concluded Dr. Hansen. "Our study shows that depression and poor well-being are also common in these patients. In our group of patients, dyspnea that limits sexual activity was more common among COPD patients than [heart failure patients](#)."

**More information:** "Sexual Dysfunction, Depression And Well-Being Among Patients With COPD Or Heart Failure" (Session B60, Monday, May 21, Area K, Moscone Center; Abstract 32631)

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