

# Physical activity found to decrease risk of dying in COPD

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Any amount of moderate to vigorous physical activity can effectively reduce the risk of dying after hospitalisation for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), according to a new study.

The research, published today in *ERJ Open Research*, significantly adds to the mounting [evidence](#) that physical activity should be used to monitor and treat [patients](#) with COPD.

Patients with COPD can be hospitalised if they experience an [acute exacerbation](#) of their symptoms. Rehospitalisation and [death rates](#) are high following any initial hospitalisation and in addition, hospitalisations due to severe exacerbations of COPD account for up to 70% of the healthcare costs associated with COPD. It is crucial that healthcare professionals can identify patients at a high-risk of readmission.

Researchers studied health records of 2,370 patients from Kaiser Permanente Southern California who were hospitalised for COPD for one year, looking at exercise as a vital sign which was self-reported in the clinic as a measure of physical activity and monitoring deaths from all causes within that time frame.

The results found that patients who were active had a 47% lower risk of death in the 12 months following a COPD hospitalisation, compared to inactive patients. Patients who were active but at insufficient levels still maintained a 28% lower risk of death, compared to inactive patients.

The authors concluded that monitoring levels of physical activity with a simple exercise "vital sign", could help healthcare professionals identify, monitor and treat those patients at a high risk of death following hospitalisation.

Lead author, Dr Marilyn Moy, Assistant Professor at Harvard Medical School, commented: "We know that physical activity can have a positive benefit for people with COPD and these findings confirm that it may reduce the risk of dying following hospitalisation for an acute exacerbation. The results also demonstrate the importance of routinely assessing physical activity in clinical care to identify high-risk patients as part of a larger strategy to promote physical activity in this highly sedentary population."

**More information:** M. L. Moy et al. Physical activity assessed in routine care predicts mortality after a COPD hospitalisation, *ERJ Open Research* (2016). [DOI: 10.1183/23120541.00062-2015](https://doi.org/10.1183/23120541.00062-2015)

Provided by European Lung Foundation

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