

COPD diagnosis study finds spirometry underused, misdiagnosis common

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According to the recommendations of the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), spirometry should be performed to establish the diagnosis of COPD in any patient who has a history of chronic cough, sputum production, difficulty breathing, or exposure to risk factors. A study conducted at the Corpus Christi Medical Center in South Texas assessed the accuracy of diagnoses and utilization of spirometry in multiple primary care clinics.

Sixty-five patient records were reviewed and only 29 percent of the patients had spirometry testing or had results available. Surprisingly, 31.6 percent of the patients diagnosed with COPD were misclassified because the spirometric measurements did not confirm the disease.

"There is a strong need for education and training on multiple levels related to the diagnosis of COPD, one of the most common conditions treated by [primary care](#) clinicians. GOLD guidelines provide clear standards on which patients to evaluate with spirometry and how to perform and interpret the tests. Applying the updated guidelines in primary care will greatly improve the rate and accuracy of diagnosis, the first step toward proper treatment." says Dr. Stephen Eikermann, lead researcher.

Further study results will be shared at CHEST Annual Meeting 2016 in Los Angeles on Wednesday, October 26, from 1:30pm - 2:30pm at the Los Angeles Convention Center Exhibit Hall, poster 960. The study

abstract can be viewed on the website of the journal *CHEST*.

More information: Stephen Eikermann et al, Adherence to GOLD Guidelines: Is Spirometry Being Done in Primary Care Settings?, *Chest* (2016). [DOI: 10.1016/j.chest.2016.08.164](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chest.2016.08.164)

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