COPD program decreases 30-day hospital readmission, may increase mortality

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Researchers from The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston have found that while the 30-day readmission rate for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease has decreased, the mortality rate has increased.

The UTMB researchers analyzed data from a nationwide cohort of more than 4.5 million Medicare beneficiaries with COPD to learn more about the impact of a federal program designed to reduce the number of people needing hospitalization within the first 30 days after being released from the hospital for a COPD-related illness.

The findings, said first author Daniel Puebla Neira, UTMB Pulmonary & Critical Care Fellow, are concerning in that some hospitals, in seeking to avoid financial penalties by reducing readmissions, may inadvertently affect minority and disadvantaged patients—people who may have a higher risk of dying.

The research team analyzed data from 4,587,542 Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries with COPD who were 65 years and older. The study period from 2006 to 2017 covers the creation of HRRP and the introduction of COPD to the program. The data revealed that while the program does decrease the 30-day hospital readmission rate, it...
also significantly increases in the risk-standardized 30-day post-discharge mortality rates across the nation.

“Further research is needed to confirm our findings and identify factors contributing to the increased mortality seen in patients with COPD in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services readmission reduction program,” said Puebla Neira.


Provided by University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston