

Joan Johnston<sup>1</sup>, Samantha McCabe<sup>2</sup>, Tim McDonnell<sup>3</sup>, Martina Blake<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joan Johnston, General Manager, COPD Support Ireland; <sup>2</sup> Samantha McCabe, Respiratory Nurse Specialist, COPD Adviceline, Asthma Society of Ireland; <sup>3</sup> Tim McDonnell, Consultant Respiratory Physician, COPD Support Ireland ; <sup>4</sup> Martina Blake, Patient Services Manager, Asthma Society of Ireland

## Introduction

The COPD Adviceline is a Freephone, Respiratory Nurse call-back service for people living with COPD, funded by the HSE since 2016. However, the COVID-19 Global Pandemic highlighted its underutilisation amongst the COPD population. At a time when the Asthma Adviceline experienced a large increase in call volume, the COPD Adviceline calls remained unchanged. We aimed to explore the reasons for this, through exploration of health professional knowledge of the COPD adviceline as a patient resource and determine what improvements could be made to increase utilisation of the service through healthcare professional referral to the service.

## Method

A 10-question e-survey was disseminated through respiratory health care professional organisations including the ISCP, Anail and the Irish Thoracic Society as well as sharing it on twitter and via the Respiratory National Clinical Programme.

## Discussion

Amongst respondents, Respiratory Nurses and Physiotherapists had most familiarity with the COPD Adviceline and there was some correlation between knowing about the COPD Adviceline and referring patients to it as seen in Tables 2 & 3. This suggests promotion amongst all health care professionals could lead to increased utilisation of the COPD Adviceline. A focus on promotion amongst medical doctors could be beneficial however responses from this cohort were in the minority making up just 15% of respondents and 4% of those who referred patients to the COPD Adviceline. Optional feedback at the end of the survey had two main themes – praise for the service and a request for more COPD Adviceline promotional materials to increase utilisation by healthcare professionals.

## Results

In total there were 73 respondents representing a cross-section of respiratory health professionals (Table 1.). 60% of respondents were aware of the COPD Adviceline, but only 31% referred patients to it. Of non-referrers, 14% reported their service fully met their patients' needs, the remainder either didn't know about COPD Adviceline, didn't have details to distribute, or didn't think of it (Table 2).

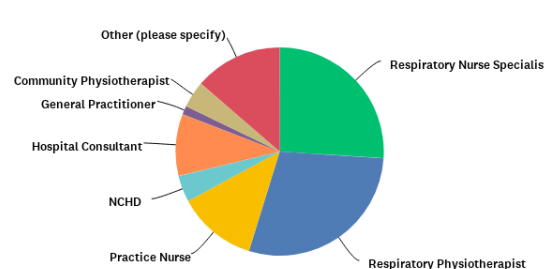


Table 1. Respondents by profession

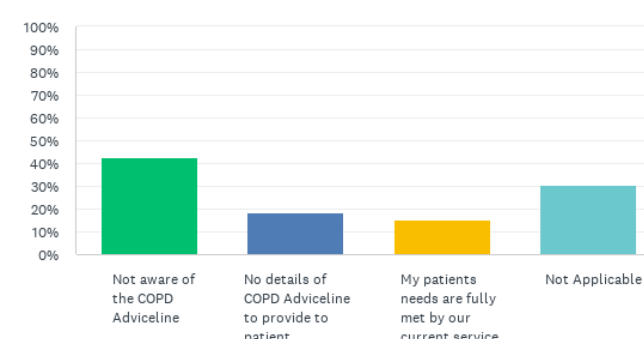


Table 2. Reasons for not referring Patients to COPD Adviceline

Amongst respondents, Respiratory Nurses and Physiotherapists had most familiarity with the COPD Adviceline (Table 3) and were the main referrers to the COPD Adviceline (Table 4)

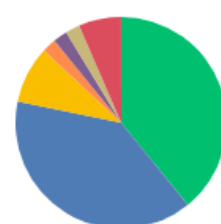


Table 3. Professions knowledge of The COPD Adviceline



Table 4. Professions who referred to the COPD Adviceline

Main referrals to the COPD Adviceline were for new diagnosis COPD patients (26%), exacerbation management plan (21%), self-management education (21%) and dyspnoea management (19%). The most valued features were ranked 1. delivery by fellow respiratory healthcare professionals, 2. comprehensive self management education and 3. the 48 hour call back time. Developing video-call breathlessness management, inhaler technique, tailored home exercise programmes and airway clearance training were ranked 1-4 as the most valuable COPD Adviceline service developments for healthcare professionals to increase utilisation of the COPD Adviceline.

## Conclusion

Overall there was a very positive response to the COPD Adviceline service amongst healthcare professionals with wider promotion being identified as a key method for increasing utilisation along with service expansions to include video call features for more comprehensive self management education.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Respiratory National Clinical Programme, Anail, ISCP and Irish Thoracic Society for dissemination of the Survey to their members.

