

7.18 Enhancing the Care of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

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Exacerbations are serious complications of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) that often require acute care in the emergency department (ED). COPD exacerbations have a negative impact on the quality of life of patients, accelerate disease progression, and can result in hospitalisations and death. Evidence-based clinical practice guidelines have been developed to best manage such episodes and improve patient outcomes.

COPD admission and discharge bundles play a key role in guiding evidence-based practice in healthcare. In general previous studies have generally focused on measuring patient outcomes and not on the degree to which the clinical pathway has been used by healthcare professionals. The documented use of the COPD bundles by clinicians was measured utilising a retrospective chart audit.

Study outcomes were interpreted and provided valuable evidence for the quality improvement of the COPD clinical pathway. Results revealed that when the COPD bundles were implemented it was not fully completed and some categories of the bundles were completed more than others. These results were reviewed by the multidisciplinary team and a collaborative approach of redesign, education and implementation inclusive of users of the COPD care pathway was instituted.