

7.21 Establishment of a Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Outreach Programme Integrated with Community Pulmonary Rehabilitation in the North West.

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Background: Community Pulmonary Rehabilitation (PR) was established in the Benbulbin Chronic Disease Management (CDM) Hub in 2021. A COPD Outreach Service was established at Sligo University Hospital (SUH) in June 2023.

Current guidelines strongly recommend PR after a severe exacerbation as it is associated with improved exercise capacity and quality of life, and reduced readmissions ¹. However, referrals for, and uptake of, post-hospitalisation PR are historically low. Previous studies have shown that delivery of a COPD discharge bundle by a PR practitioner is associated with increased PR referral and uptake ². Both SUH COPD Outreach team members have recent experience as Pulmonary Rehabilitation practitioners (PT C.SP 4.5 years, CNS 6 months).

Methods: Site networking meetings were established for COPD outreach staff to visit the Hub. Shared journal club meetings and RIC Steering Group meetings were attended. The National Clinical Programme COPD Discharge Bundle template was implemented for all COPD Outreach referrals with referral to PR prompted. Access was secured to shared electronic folders patient resources and a database was established to enhance communication about patients. Data was collected on PR referral rates.

Results: Successful referral pathways have been established. 9 (100%) of eligible COPD Outreach patients have been referred onto PR. Patients who were clinically assessed as requiring prioritisation were effectively highlighted via communication channels and timely review scheduled. Further audit plans to examine rates of uptake and completion of those referred to PR by COPD Outreach.

Conclusions: Closer integration between hospital and PR services with effective communication and shared network resources may increase post-hospitalisation PR referral and uptake.

Keywords: COPD, pulmonary rehabilitation, integrated-care.

Disclosures:

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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