



The Global Burden of COPD: An International Call to Action

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Background

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a fatal lung disease characterised by progressive and irreversible airflow limitation.¹ Every hour, COPD is estimated to kill over 250 people worldwide² and the annual death rate from the disease is greater than that of lung cancer and breast cancer combined.^{2,3}

Morbidity and mortality from COPD are considerable, and increasing. By the year 2020, COPD is predicted to become the third leading cause of death worldwide (exceeded only by heart disease and stroke).^{4,5,6,7}

To date, numerous important initiatives have made significant progress in addressing the burden of COPD. These include the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) guidelines for the effective diagnosis and management of COPD,¹ the annual World COPD Day, and the World Health Organization's recently announced Global Alliance Against Chronic Respiratory Diseases (GARD).

Despite these efforts, COPD remains under-recognised, under-acknowledged and under-treated.^{8,9} Between 9% and 30% of patients could be undiagnosed despite having symptoms consistent with COPD, and many do not receive appropriate treatment and management.^{10,11}

The Global Burden of COPD Summit (chaired by Professor Leonardo Fabbri MD, Modena, Italy) was convened to raise awareness and increase efforts to address the growing impact COPD is set to have on global health.

References:

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The Global Burden of COPD Call to Action

Participants of the Global Burden of COPD Summit call on healthcare professionals, healthcare providers, non-government organisations (NGOs) and governments to take the following actions to address the growing burden of COPD and its rising mortality rate:

1. Increase awareness and understanding of COPD and its co-morbidities

- among healthcare professionals, healthcare providers, patients, carers, advocacy groups, NGOs, governments, payors and other interested parties
- through increased research into the causes and consequences of optimal management of COPD and its co-morbidities
- through increased education programmes for healthcare professionals, patients, carers and the public

2. Increase access to early and accurate diagnosis, leading to effective management and treatment for all patients with COPD

- through improved implementation of published COPD guidelines
- through identification and resolution of economic and political factors which limit provision of effective management and treatment

3. Increase efforts to prevent COPD and its growing mortality burden

- through public education programmes on COPD prevention
- through minimisation of COPD risk factors

Supporters of the Global Burden of COPD Call to Action



Heather Allan	Executive Director – Clinical Relations, The Australian Lung Foundation
Meyer Balter MD	Associate Professor of Medicine, University of Toronto
Jean Bourbeau MD	Director of the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Unit, Montreal Chest Institute, McGill University Health Centre, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Professor Kenneth Chapman	Professor of Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada and Director, Asthma & Airway Centre, University Health Network
Professor Leonardo Fabbri	University of Modena & Reggio Emilia, Modena, Italy
Monica Fletcher	Chief Executive, National Respiratory Training Center Education for Health
Professor Gordon T. Ford MD	FRCPC, FACP, FCCP, Department of Medicine, Division of Respiratory Medicine, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada and President, Canadian Thoracic Society/Canadian Lung Association
Professor Yoshinosuke Fukuchi	Juntendo University, Tokyo, Japan
Lawrence D. Grouse MD	Clinical Assistant Professor, University of Washington School of Medicine
Dr Claude Lenfant	Executive Director, International COPD Coalition (ICC)
Professor Claes-Göran Löfdahl	Department of Respiratory Medicine and Allergy, Lund University Hospital, Lund, Sweden
Dr David Mannino	University of Kentucky School of Medicine, USA
Professor Ana M.B. Menezes	Federal University of Pelotas, Brazil
Mr Svein-Erik Myrseth	President, European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patient Association (EFA)
Professor David Price	General Practice Airways Group Professor of Primary Care Respiratory Medicine, University of Aberdeen and International Primary Care Respiratory Group (IPCRG)
Vlady Rozenbaum PHD	Founder-Administrator, COPD-ALERT, International Online Support & Advocacy Group
M.R. Rutgers, MSc	Director, Netherlands Asthma Foundation
Mr John Walsh	Chair, International COPD Coalition (ICC) Executive Committee