

# ERS and ATS publish statement on the current state and future directions of COPD research

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The European Respiratory Society (ERS) and American Thoracic Society (ATS) have published a statement describing the current evidence on the diagnosis, assessment and management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), identifying gaps in knowledge and making recommendations for the directions of future research.

ERS Guidelines Director, Professor Guy Brusselle, commented: "The World Health Organization predicts that COPD will become the third leading cause of death worldwide by 2030. It is therefore a critical time for us to act on improving the management of people with the condition. This document provides us with a valuable point of reference for identifying the most effective types of research in the field of COPD. By identifying the right questions to ask, we aim to improve the diagnosis, assessment and treatment of people with COPD."

"Although much progress has been made in the assessment and treatment of patients with COPD, a range of important questions remains," said Kevin C. Wilson, MD, Senior Director of Documents and Medical Affairs at the ATS and co-chair of the committee that produced the statement. "In our review of the evidence, we aimed to identify these knowledge gaps and highlight questions that will have the greatest impact on improving patient outcomes if addressed by future research."

The ERS/ATS Research Statement highlights the types of research that

leading clinicians and researchers believe will have the greatest impact on outcomes, including studies to determine the impact of COPD-related clinical practice guidelines on outcomes in patients with COPD. The statement appears in the April 1 issue of the European Respiratory Society's *European Respiratory Journal* and the April issue of the American Thoracic Society's *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*.

**Recommendations include:**

- Using patient-centred outcomes in clinical research
- Finding high-quality surrogate outcomes that reliably predict patient-centred outcomes
- Research examining the role of CT scanning in COPD patients
- Studies assessing the accuracy and utility of COPD screening tools currently used for diagnosis and guiding treatment
- Examination of the relationship between phenotypic traits and patient outcomes
- Studies on the relationships between COPD and comorbidities
- Research on the effects of quitting smoking on COPD disease activity and on approaches to help patients quit smoking
- Studies measuring the effects of pharmacological treatments in different COPD subtypes and of different pharmacological treatment approaches and combinations
- Studies comparing the effectiveness of home-based, hospital-based and community-based pulmonary rehabilitation programmes
- Research on the effectiveness of long-term oxygen therapy and long-term noninvasive mechanical ventilation for COPD patients

**More information:** An Official American Thoracic Society / European Respiratory Society Statement: Research Questions in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, [DOI: 10.1183/09031936.0009015](https://doi.org/10.1183/09031936.0009015)

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