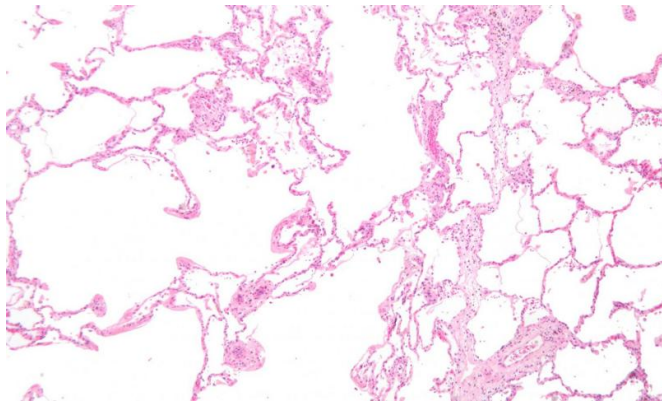


Study finds COPD patients are not learning how to properly use their inhaler devices

1 May 2018



Micrograph showing emphysema (left – large empty spaces) and lung tissue with relative preservation of the alveoli (right). Credit: Wikipedia, CC-BY-SA 3.0

Inhaled medications play an important role in treating chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, and it is imperative that the inhaler device be used properly to effectively treat the disease. However, in a recently released study in the *Journal of the COPD Foundation*, researchers from Baylor College of Medicine and other institutions found that healthcare providers and patients prioritize medication over device when selecting treatments, showing limited concerns about proper device use.

"For COPD, there are several inhaler devices through which most medications are administered, but we noticed over the years that many [patients](#) don't use their inhaler correctly," said lead author Dr. Nicola Hanania, associate professor of medicine in the section of pulmonary, critical care and sleep medicine and director of the airways clinical research center at Baylor. "This study, which was conducted via a survey, aimed to look at both the [healthcare](#) providers and the patients' perspectives and beliefs about inhaler devices used to treat their COPD."

The study included two surveys, one targeting healthcare practitioners who treat COPD and the other targeting patients with COPD in the United States. A total of 513 survey responses were collected from healthcare practitioners, and 499 [survey](#) responses were collected from patients.

The study uncovered several gaps in healthcare practitioners' and patients' understanding of the role of inhalation devices in COPD management. After reviewing the surveys from each group, researchers found that patients and healthcare providers put how to use their inhaler device second in importance to the drug being used to treat their COPD.

Researchers also identified that there is a need for better education related to inhaler devices. Many patients are not getting an adequate amount of education from their healthcare practitioner about how to use their [inhaler](#) device. The study highlights potential unmet needs and opportunities for future interventions to coordinate professional and patient-directed education to further promote proper device selection and use in COPD management.

"Our results indicate that we need to reach out to healthcare providers and patients to educate them more about delivery systems that are available for COPD so that when it comes to getting the right medicine for the patient, the [device](#) choice should be part of the decision-making. It should be a shared decision between the patient and the clinician because many patients may not master one delivery system so their choice for choosing another one should be there," Hanania said.

More information: Nicola A. Hanania et al. The Role of Inhalation Delivery Devices in COPD: Perspectives of Patients and Health Care Providers, *Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases: Journal of the COPD Foundation* (2018). [DOI: 10.15326/jcopdf.5.2.2017.0168](https://doi.org/10.15326/jcopdf.5.2.2017.0168)

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