

COPD Patient Education Programme – an initiative between the NHS and British Lung Foundation



Jefford H(3), Dowling L(1), Whittamore A(2)

(1)British Lung Foundation (BLF), (2)Wessex AHSN,

(3)Independent – MCSP, specialist physiotherapist in COPD



Aims

Patient education and self-care is an essential part of chronic disease management. We aimed to test an approach where a third sector organisation worked with expert patients and local clinicians to deliver a short course of education for patients with COPD.

NICE, Cochrane and the National Strategy for COPD all recommend self-management strategies to help people with lung conditions maintain their health. Recent studies show that disease-specific self-management improves health status and reduces hospital admissions in COPD patients. Pulmonary Rehabilitation (PR) includes formal education to patients with COPD yet the National COPD Audit (2008) revealed that only 15% of patients attended PR in the previous 12months.

The BLF has piloted a patient education programme in order to assess the effect a short course of education can make to someone with COPD.

Method

The programme consisted of two sessions 3 hours long, held a week apart. The workshops were interactive and led by an experienced respiratory physiologist. The programme provided self-management education, peer to peer learning, goal setting and behaviour change support. It aimed to improve patients' knowledge and understanding of their condition, improve COPD symptoms and psychological wellbeing as well as patients' self-efficacy and ability to self-manage. The programme will complement PR and local services (e.g. psychological therapies, smoking cessation, Breathe Easy, exercise).

To evaluate whether the workshops were a successful intervention for patients with COPD, the BLF completed an enhanced evaluation which involved assessing patients' disease management, self-efficacy, COPD understanding and psychological wellbeing, before and after

the workshops and at three and six months. This allowed analysis of whether education workshops are an effective self-management tool for patients. In addition, participants received two motivational phone calls after the workshop to follow up on their progress and to provide encouragement to achieve the goal they had set at the workshop.

Results

Metric	Pre-Course (n=21)	Post-course (n=10)	6months (n=7)
COPD Understanding	16.45	23.40	22.00
CAT (COPD Assessment Test)	21.41	16.6	16.00
Self-efficacy	38.23	46.10	41.00
Wellbeing (WEMWBS)	47.05	58.40	61.00

Getting patient engagement was difficult and requires further evaluation.

Patients that attended enjoyed and benefitted from the course.

“These classes were absolutely brilliant. I learned more at the workshop than I have in the nine years since I was diagnosed. I now have better insight into COPD and am confident in being able to control my condition rather than letting it control me.” **Attendee**

The skills and patient-facing nature of third sector organisations can be effectively utilised by the NHS for the benefit of patients.

Conclusion

The results demonstrate the positive effect of a group based workshop in engaging and retaining patients in their own self-management. The programme was effective in improving patient symptomology as well as quality of life, having benefits for both physical and psychological wellbeing.

- There were noticeable and sustained improvements in participants' understanding of COPD post workshop and at three and six months

- The programme helped to reduce the impact of the symptoms of COPD on patients and this was sustained at three and six months
- Patients' activation in their ability to manage their long term condition improved following the workshop and was sustained at three and six months
- There was a meaningful increase in positive mental health and wellbeing, which was sustained at 3 months and increased again at 6 months