

# COPD Review 2021

## Summary

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COPD is a common, preventable and treatable condition which presents with persistent respiratory symptoms and airflow limitation that is due to airway and/or alveolar abnormalities and it is usually caused by significant exposure to noxious particles or gases

- Emphysema - permanent destruction of alveoli resulting in larger airspaces, leading to impaired gas transfer (anatomical diagnosis)
- Chronic bronchitis - Cough productive of sputum on most days of the week >3m/yr x 2 consecutive years (clinical diagnosis)

Aetiology/predisposition – Smoking, biomass fumes, air pollution, early lung insults, failure to develop maximal lung function, Alpha 1 Antitrypsin (A1AT) deficiency

A1AT deficiency leads to development of emphysema in smokers and never-smokers

Multiple genetic variants – disease if critically low A1AT (Homozygous ZZ or Null variants)

Symptoms – Dyspnoea, wheezing, cough and sputum.

Diagnosis – Spirometry - Post-bronchodilator airflow obstruction (FEV1/VC ratio (<0.70), or <LLN)

Accuracy in performance of Spirometry is essential

Non Pharmacological and Pharmacological treatments

Tailor inhaler choice to patient's capabilities and needs. Always verify adherence before changing inhalers

COPD is has multiple extra-pulmonary features which should be addressed in holistic fashion

Early identification and treatment of complications

### Practice

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