



Early Integration of Palliative Care in Patients Diagnosed with COPD



Julie L. Jones, MD, FACP

www.cuanschutz.edu/MSPC

Statement of the Problem

- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is extremely prevalent and is associated with high symptom burden. ^{1,2}
- There are numerous benefits provided by access to palliative care (PC) in this population. ³
- Despite this, within our institution there are a small number of PC consults for this patient population (6% of PC referrals)

Background/Literature Review

- COPD: 4th leading cause of death affects 16 million Americans. ⁴
- There is high hospitalization and ICU utilization rates within the last 2 years of life for most COPD patients. ⁵
- Recent studies demonstrate inpatient PC consults can increase access to outpatient medical services including PC. ^{6,7}

Purpose/Aims

This quality improvement project's purpose is to increase access to PC for high-risk hospitalized patients with COPD.

High-risk COPD patients defined by:

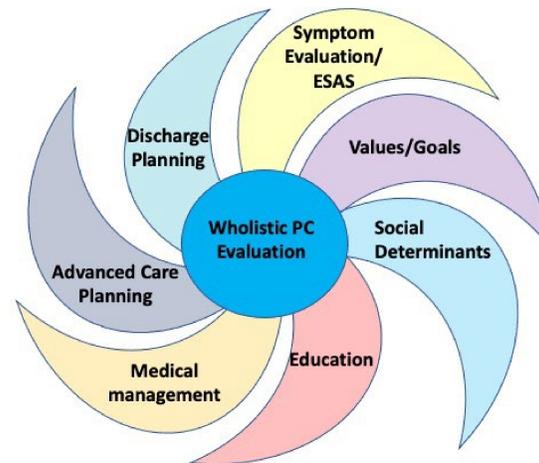
- Required NIV or intubation during hospitalization
- Have had 2 or more COPD-related admissions within the last 6 months.

Specific Aims

- Create a more standardized approach for PC team to complete consults on COPD patients.
- Increase referrals to outpatient PC, outpatient pulmonary, and pulmonary rehabilitation.

Methods

- Quality improvement project at First Health Moore Regional Hospital, Pinehurst NC
- Educational session provided to hospitalists/ICU staff with pocket card distribution
- Template created as a guide to inpatient PC staff for COPD consults.
- Consults were accepted over a 1 month period in May 2022



Palliative Care Initiative for Patients with COPD

Who to refer:
Hospitalized patients with a primary diagnosis of COPD who:

- Have had a prior COPD related admission within the last 6 months
- Is currently requiring non-invasive ventilation
- Is currently intubated

What we can offer:

- Review of outpatient COPD medication regimen
- Evaluation of compliance/barriers to compliance
- Evaluation and recommendations for symptom management
- Education about disease process
- Advanced care planning discussions
- Facilitation of outpatient referrals (outpatient PC, pulmonary rehab, pulmonary clinic)

Tips to discuss referral with patient:
"COPD can be a very challenging disease. We have a team here in the hospital who helps patients like you, who have serious chronic illnesses. They can evaluate ways to help manage your symptoms and provide an additional layer of support. I'm going to put in a referral for them to come meet you."

Thank you for allowing us to assist you with these complicated patients.

FirstHealth
PALLIATIVE CARE

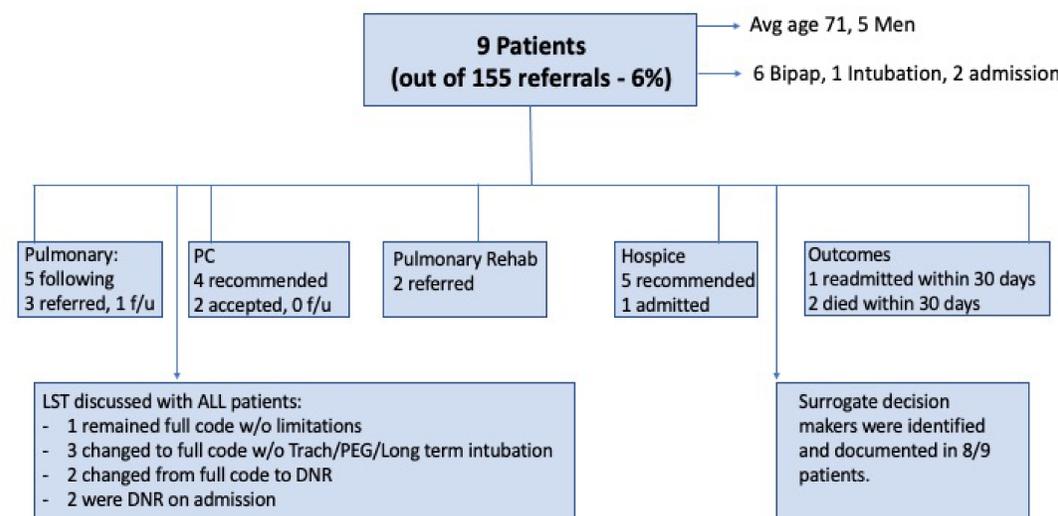
Implications

- There was no increase in the percentage of PC referrals.
- An increase in referrals to outpatient resources, including PC, was not achieved.
- There was strong support from hospital administration and hospitalist/ICU leadership.
- Life-sustaining treatment preferences and surrogate decision-makers were successfully documented in nearly all patients.
- Ongoing education particularly of the benefits PC can offer earlier in the disease trajectory of COPD is needed both for PC staff and throughout the organization.

Limitations

- Short duration
- Staffing conflicts/shortage
- Inclusion criteria may have been too restrictive
- Inability of EHR to identify patient population

Findings



Acknowledgements/References

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