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Title: Validation of CAT as an independent assessment tool in pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

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Body: The benefits of PR in COPD are well recognised but the practical assessment of patients undergoing PR can be complex. The COPD assessment test (CAT) is a recently introduced simple, validated 8-item questionnaire designed to assess the impact of COPD symptoms on quality of life (QOL). We hypothesized that CAT could be used as a screening tool and outcome measure to assess QOL in COPD. 60 patients with COPD enrolled in 8 weeks outpatient PR between January 2011 and October 2011 were studied. Patients completed CAT score, chronic respiratory disease questionnaire (CRDQ), hospital anxiety and depression (HAD) at baseline and at 8 weeks. Functional status (6 min walk test (6MWT) and incremental shuttle walk test (ISWT)), dyspnoea (MRCd) and body mass index (BMI) were measured. 52 COPD patients completed the 8 weeks PR and data were available for 37 patients with mean (SD) age 68.7 (9.2) yrs and FEV1 48.64 (20.79) % predicted. There was a significant difference in 6MWT (47.03m), ISWT (47.84m), MRCd (0.3 points), CRDQ (-3.02 points), Anxiety (1.5points), depression (0.6points) and CAT (3.63 points) post PR. CAT correlated closely with CRDQ at baseline and following PR whereas there was good correlation only with ISWT, anxiety and depression post PR. CAT is an independent, simple and highly responsive outcome measure that can also be utilized for screening patients with COPD for PR.