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Title: Diagnosis confirmation and staging in patients hospitalized with diagnosis of COPD in a general hospital with adequate resources

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Body: Introduction: GOLD guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of COPD are widely spread. Some simple tools such as a positive smoking history, spirometry measurements and blood gases evaluation are fundamental to establish the diagnosis and evaluate disease severity. Objective: to verify to whether these fundamental issues are present in the medical records of patients hospitalized with diagnosis of COPD in a general hospital in Brazil. Methods: electronic medical records from 236 hospitalized from April 2011 to March 2012 with diagnosis of COPD were evaluated retrospectively. Patient's characteristics and data related to hospitalization, smoking status, spirometry measurements and blood gases were collected. Results: 236 patients were admitted, 50% male, mean age: 68±11.3y. Mean hospitalization time was 13.4±17.1 days. 8.9% were hospitalized more than once, 22.5% received intensive care treatment and 25% deceased. Most frequent comorbidities were diabetes mellitus (17.8%) and systemic arterial hypertension (43%). Active smoking was present in 41.5%; however, previous smoking status was not available. All patients had chest X-ray; however, only 46.6% had spirometry evaluation and for 65.7% blood gases values were registered. Data on oxygen saturation was not found in the medical records. COPD diagnosis was not confirmed in 8% those with spirometry evaluation. Conclusions: Even in hospital where tools for diagnosis and treatment of COPD are available, a large number of patients did not have confirmation of disease diagnosis and staging. Reinforcement of the importance of COPD diagnosis and staging for adequacy of the treatment and the control of the disease is still needed.