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Title: Hospital adherence to GOLD guidelines for COPD exacerbation. Results of the European COPD audit

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Body: Objectives. Understanding how European care of COPD admissions varies against guideline standards provides an opportunity to target appropriate quality improvement interventions. We aimed to analyse health care provided to COPD admissions against GOLD guidelines. Methods. In 2010-11 an audit of care against the 2010 GOLD standards was performed in 16018 patients from 384 hospitals in 13 countries. Clinicians prospectively identified consecutive COPD admissions over an 8 week period recording clinical care measures on a web based data-tool. Data were analysed comparing adherence to 10 key guideline standards in GOLD 2010. Results. The subjects comprised 67.8% males, mean age 70.8 (SD 10.8) years, mean FEV1 44.04 (SD 17.4)%. Adherence varied between hospitals and across countries. Average compliance is reflected in the table. Altogether 15.3% fulfilled all 10 recommendations.

Guideline recommendation adherence

Audit Standard	Compliance at case level (%)
Spirometry result available at admission	59.4
Arterial Blood Gas performed at admission	82.4
Chest radiograph performed at admission	98.6
Controlled oxygen therapy used	84.9
Short-acting bronchodilator use	91.1
Non-use of Intravenous methylxanthines	85.7
Systemic corticosteroids given	82.3
Antibiotics given if sputum purulence or IMV	90.5
NIV given if pH <7.35 and PaCO ₂ >6kPa	51.0

IMV given if pH <7.25 and PaCO ₂ >8kpa	15.4
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Conclusions. The European COPD Audit describes adherence to GOLD guideline across Europe. The lack of available spirometry results and variable use of oxygen and NIV are high impact areas identified for improvement.