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Title: A pulmonary rehabilitation program at a public hospital in Buenos Aires, Argentina

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Body: Introduction: Respiratory rehabilitation is a therapeutic strategy for improving quality of life in patients with chronic respiratory disease. Maintaining a pulmonary rehabilitation program in a public hospital poses a challenge. Objective: To share our experience and assess the impact of a pulmonary rehabilitation program on both quality of life and the six minute walking test. Method: Pulmonary rehabilitation program was carried out between May 1996 and December 2011, 382 patients were interviewed for admission to pulmonary rehabilitation program of whom 102 subsequently completed the sixteen week program. Patients attended the bi-weekly program which consisted of education, physical training, psychological support and nutritional counseling. Patients were assessed with the Chronic Respiratory Questionnaire (CRQ) and the six minute walking test (6MWT) before initiating and after concluding the program. Results: Sixty nine of the 102 patients completing the pulmonary rehabilitation program were males; mean age was 63.85 ± 9 ; mean force expiratory volume in 1 second was $39.06\% \pm 7$. Prior to pulmonary rehabilitation program the mean 6MWT was 338.69 ± 21 and post pulmonary rehabilitation it was 405.94 ± 105 mts. The sum of the four CRQ domains was 83.39 ± 19 prior to rehabilitation and 100.82 ± 19 after the pulmonary rehabilitation, indicating improved quality of life. Conclusion: Pulmonary rehabilitation led to improvements in the six minute walking test and a quality of life; however, patient compliance was low.