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Title: Prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in a general population in Norway

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Body: Introduction: The prevalence of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is increasing worldwide. There is need for regularly updated estimates to better monitor the burden of disease. Objectives: To present updated prevalence estimates and risk factors of Global Initiative for Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) defined COPD in a general adult population. Methods: In the Hordaland County Cohort Study (HCCS), 1664 subjects aged 35-90 yrs answered questionnaires and performed spirometry in 2003-05. The prevalence of COPD was calculated using mean estimates, and risk factors for COPD were analysed using logistic regression. Results: In a previous study phase, prevalence of GOLD-defined COPD was 7%. Nine years later, the prevalence was 14 %. A vast majority (70%) of the subjects experienced one or more respiratory symptoms, but only 1 out of 4 had a physician's diagnosis. As many as 1 out of 5 current smokers suffered from COPD, while approximately 1 out of 20 never-smokers had COPD. Significant risk factors for COPD were sex, age, smoking habits, pack-years and occupational exposure. Men had 1.7 (OR, 95% CI 1.2, 2.3) higher odds of COPD than women. Subjects older than 65yrs had 10.3 (OR, 95% CI 6.4, 16.5) times higher odds for COPD than subjects younger than 40yrs. Those who smoked more than 20 pack-years had 4.2 (OR, 95% CI 2.6, 6.7) times higher odds for COPD than subjects smoking less than 10 pack-years. Conclusion: The prevalence of GOLD defined COPD had increased substantially, from 7% to 14%, during the last 9 years. There is still a large amount of under diagnosis in COPD, which indicates that the awareness of the disease including better diagnostic routines is needed.