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Title: Death risk factors in COPD patients in Italian general practices: The COMODHES study

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Body: Background: Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) represents an important and increasing burden worldwide and can be an important cause of premature death. Aims: to evaluate the risk factors for a death event reported by general practitioners (GPs) in their COPD patients. Methods: prospective observational study in different Italian areas. 139 GPs enrolled 1874 patients with COPD diagnosis. Questionnaires were used to collect data on COPD management, health status and risk factors at baseline and after 12 months. Univariate analyses were used to assess the relationship between reported death events and demographic characteristics (age, sex), risk factors exposure, health services use and GPs education. Logistic regression analysis was used to confirm the relationships found through the univariate analyses. Results: After 12 months 7.3% of patients died. Univariate analyses showed a significantly higher frequency of death in males, older age, subjects with a higher number of exacerbations, ex-smokers, subjects with higher use of health services (GPs visits, emergency room and hospital admissions) and higher COPD severity level; a lower frequency was shown in subjects that received a GPs education on smoking reduction. The logistic regression analysis confirmed the associations between death and older age (OR 1.10), higher number of exacerbations (OR 1.12), male gender (OR 1.83), current smoking (OR 2.08), hospital admissions (OR 2.10) and very severe COPD (OR 3.63). Conclusions: beside the known demographic characteristics, a very severe COPD requiring hospitalisation and current smoking habits are closely related to a reduced life expectancy. Funded by the Italian Health Minister.