Time for a change: anticipating the diagnosis and treatment of COPD

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COPD is often not diagnosed, or is diagnosed too late. It is time for a change that anticipates both diagnosis and treatment.

COPD is a major public health problem because of its high prevalence (about 10% of the adult population), rising incidence (likely related to the ageing of the population), associated morbimortality (it is currently the third leading cause of death globally), and personal, social and economic costs [1]. The traditional way to address this problem has been to reduce smoking exposure, the main environmental risk factor for COPD [1]. Although this was, is and will be, a key public-health strategy, we argue here that it is not enough. If we want to eradicate COPD [2], it is time for a change that anticipates the diagnosis and treatment of the disease.