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The load of dyspnoea on brain and legs

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Cognitive impairments are common in patients with dyspnoea, associated with additional adverse health effects, but remain under-recognised and under-treated. Acute dyspnoea can worsen cognitive and locomotor performance, potentiating patient burden. <https://bit.ly/3biHnAN>

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Dyspnoea is the subjective experience of breathing discomfort that can vary in quality and intensity and lead to subsequent physiological and behavioural responses [1, 2]. It is a highly frightening experience for many patients worldwide and associated with severe disability and impaired functioning. Recurrent acute, as well as chronic, forms of dyspnoea cause significant loss of quality of life and can evolve into an overwhelming burden in all areas of life in affected patients, and also in their caregivers and families [3–5]. Dyspnoea is not only the cardinal symptom in respiratory and heart diseases, such as COPD [6], asthma [7] and heart failure [8], but is also prominent in various other prevalent diseases, including cancer and neuromuscular diseases, as well as mental disorders, such as anxiety, panic and psychosomatic disorders [2, 9–12]. The enormous relevance of dyspnoea is further reflected by estimations that up to 25% of the general population and up to 50% of severely ill patients are suffering from dyspnoea [2, 12]. Alarming, dyspnoea is often under-recognised and under-treated [13], despite the availability of respective diagnostic instruments and multidisciplinary treatment approaches [5, 14–16].