

# Mapping and exploring alternatives to the current diagnostic pathway(s) for patients in the UK with suspected COPD: A mixed methods study for the CORMORANT programme

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## INTRODUCTION

- Early diagnosis and treatment of COPD slow lung function decline and improve quality of life.<sup>1</sup> But it is estimated half of the 3 million people with COPD are not diagnosed<sup>2</sup> and diagnosis is often delayed.<sup>3</sup>
- Current clinical guidelines underscore spirometry as a key part of COPD diagnosis but access to spirometry is 'patchy' and varies across the UK.<sup>4</sup> Gaps in provision appear to be greatest in the most deprived communities.<sup>4</sup>
- The landscape of COPD diagnosis has changed rapidly in recent years, including new delivery models such as Community Diagnostic Centres which are attempting to address inequalities in provision.
- There is considerable interest in diagnostic technology innovation to provide alternative methods of COPD diagnosis to replace or complement spirometry within the diagnostic pathway.

## METHODS

- This study aims to (1) map the current pathway(s) for diagnosing COPD within and from primary care in the UK; (2) identify current challenges around COPD diagnosis and spirometry services; and (3) explore how new technology for COPD diagnosis could be implemented within clinical pathways.
- We are using an explanatory sequential mixed methods design to understand the current pathways and capture the perspectives of healthcare professionals (HCPs) and professional stakeholders involved in COPD diagnosis. This incorporates several components:



- Quantitative data will be analysed using descriptive statistics and qualitative data will be analysed thematically.

## RESULTS

- The survey launched in August 2025; we present here provisional findings drawn from survey responses received to date (n=13).
- Respondents work in GP practice (n=6), hospital/outpatient (n=3), service delivery (n=2) and primary care-based hub (n=1) settings in England.
- 12/13 respondents think there is currently a major/moderate delay in COPD diagnosis (Fig 1).
- While nearly all (12/13) respondents think spirometry is essential to confirm COPD diagnosis, spirometry being unavailable or with a long wait were major factors explaining the delays in diagnosis (Fig 2), along with delays in patients seeking help and COPD not being suspected.

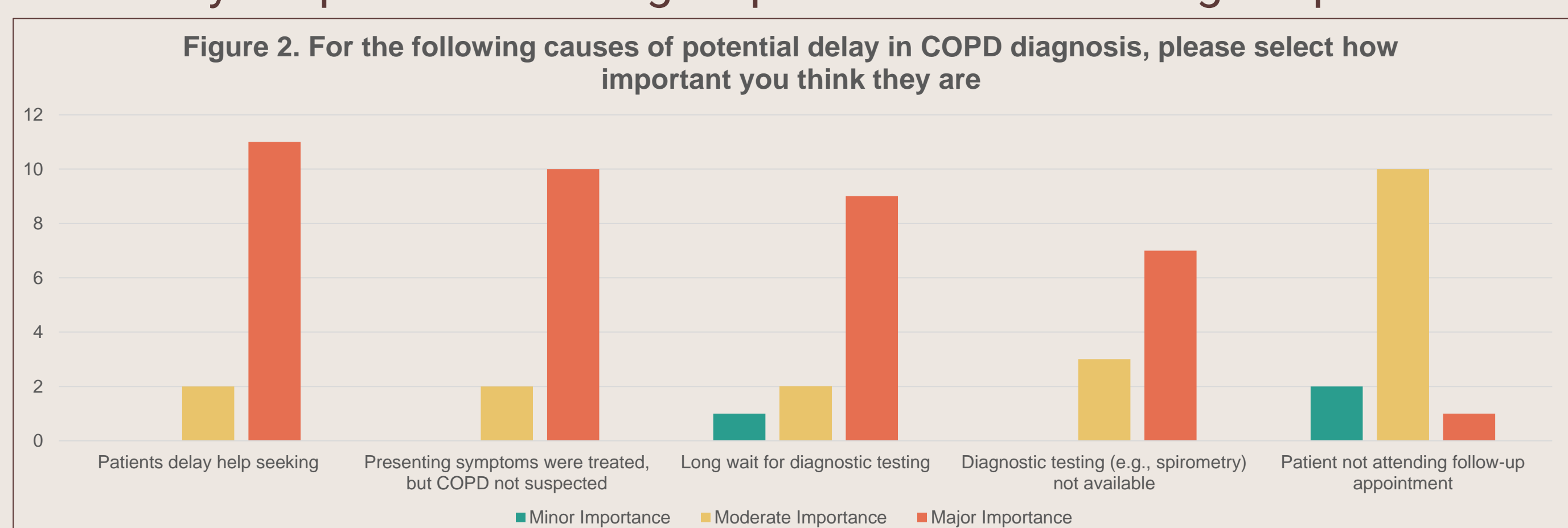
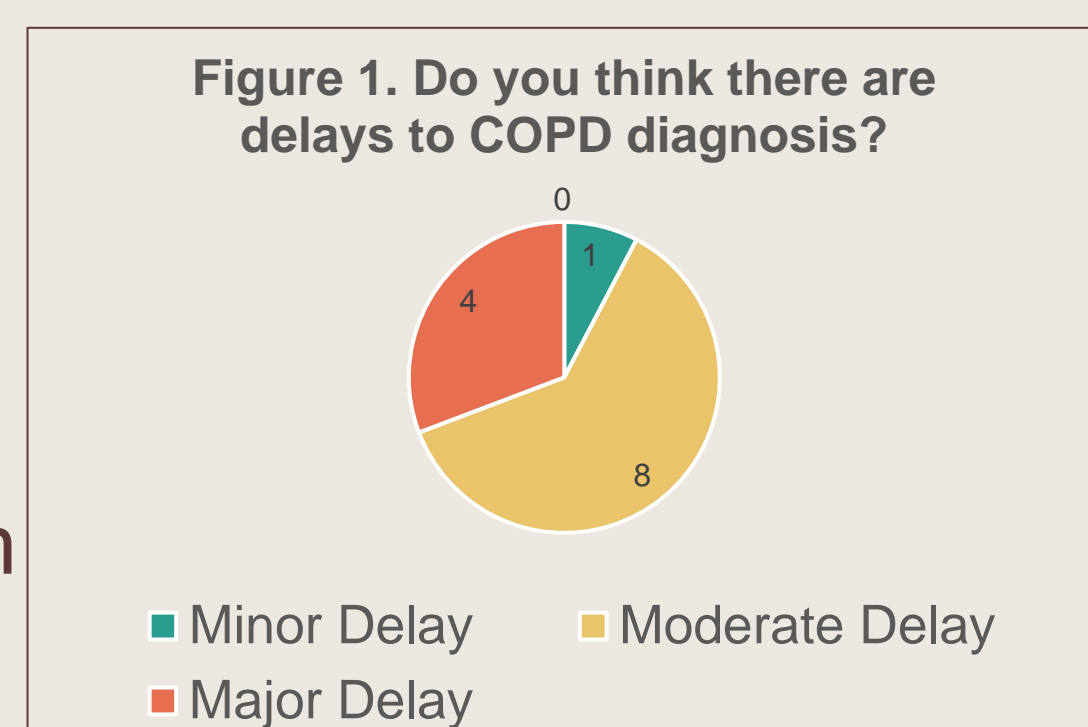
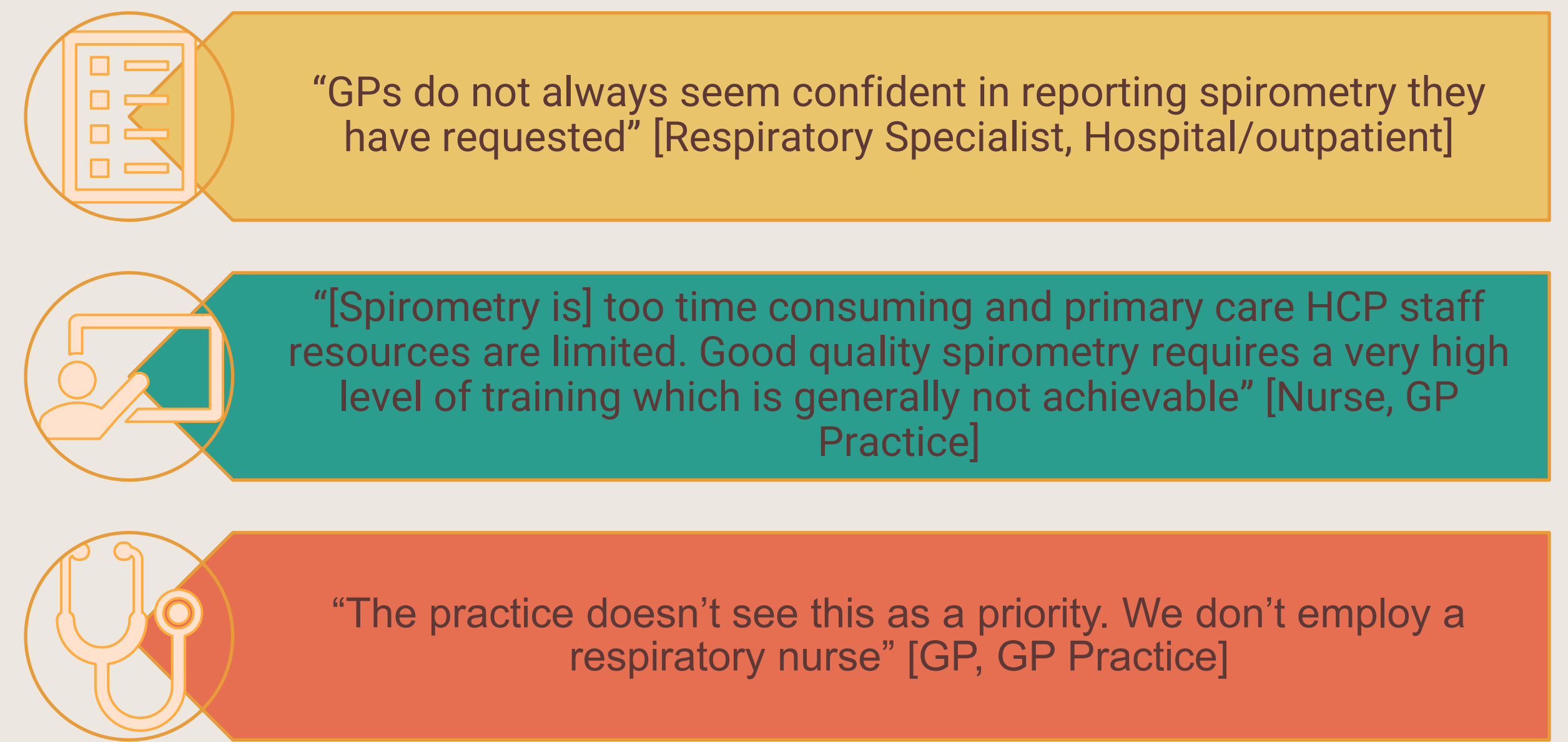
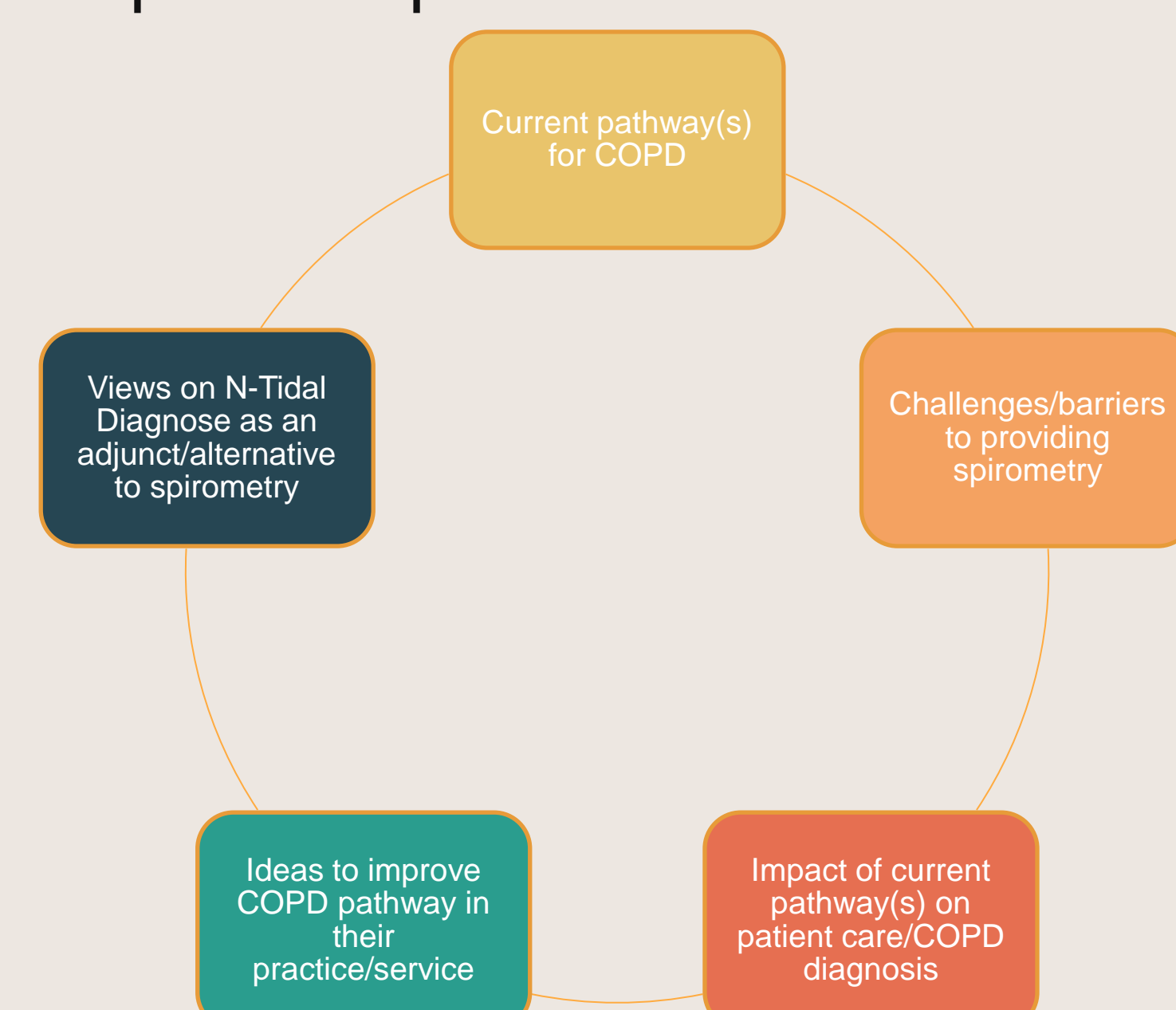


Figure 3. Free text responses summarising issues with spirometry provision



## NEXT STEPS

- Dissemination and promotion of COPD diagnosis survey to professionals to maximise responses for final analysis (see QR code below to take part).
- During the next stage of the study we will be interviewing healthcare professionals and professional stakeholders (n≥30) across the UK working in with different pathways for COPD diagnosis (e.g., GP practice, hubs, diagnostic centres).
- Topics to explore in qualitative interviews include:



- Results from this mixed methods study will provide an up-to-date and detailed understanding of the current state of COPD diagnosis in the UK. This study is part of the CORMORANT programme which is evaluating a potential new technology (N-Tidal Diagnose) for COPD diagnosis and results will inform health economic evaluations and plans for implementation.

## REFERENCES

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Are you an HCP involved in COPD diagnosis? We need your help...

- Complete the COPD diagnosis survey today! Click the QR code – it's mobile friendly!
- For more information about the interview study, please contact Dr Caity Roleston ([caity.roleston@phc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:caity.roleston@phc.ox.ac.uk))



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