



# Accurate diagnosis of COPD

Early and accurate diagnosis of COPD is important, as all too often people do not have their diagnosis confirmed until they are well down the trajectory of functional decline. There are a range of different diseases (both respiratory and non-respiratory) that present with symptoms similar to COPD, and these should be explored and excluded before proceeding to formal COPD assessment.

Spirometry does not diagnose COPD, it confirms obstruction, which, combined with the clinical picture, confirms the diagnosis of COPD. It should be noted that there are other causes of obstructive spirometry, such as asthma, structural narrowing of the airway (from both intrinsic airway damage such as previous trauma and bronchiectasis and external compression from space occupying lesions) and foreign body.

## PCRS-UK Resources:

- PCRS-UK Opinion sheets - Diagnosis of COPD in primary care, Differential diagnosis of the breathless patient
- PCRS-UK Quick Guide to the diagnosis and management of COPD in primary care
- PCRS-UK COPD assessment and review protocol

## Other Resources:

- National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Clinical Guideline 101. Management of COPD in adults. <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG101>

- ✓ Improve COPD diagnosis
- ✓ Increase COPD prevalence in the practice
- ✓ Better diagnosis and treatment for people with COPD

Practice Improvement Worksheets, DRAFT version 01, Date of Expiry December 2015

*This series of practice improvement worksheets are intended for members to use within their practice. This is a pilot project, prepared in DRAFT format. Please tell us what you think! We would like feedback on the accuracy, completeness, usefulness and outcomes of the resource. To submit your feedback visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EQUIPIIW>*

Authors: Iain Small, Aberdeen; Morag Reilly, Aberdeen; June Roberts, Cheshire

Editor: Dr Iain Small

© Primary Care Respiratory Society UK  
The Primary Care Respiratory Society is a registered charity (Charity No: 1098117) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England (Company No: 4298947).

VAT Registration Number: 866 1543 09.

Registered Offices: PCRS-UK, Unit 2, Warwick House, Kingsbury Road, Curdworth, Sutton Coldfield, B76 9EE

Telephone: +44 (0)1675 477600

Facsimile: +44 (0) 121 336 1914

Email: [info@pcrs-uk.org](mailto:info@pcrs-uk.org)

Official Publication: Primary Care Respiratory Medicine <http://www.nature.com/npjpcrm/>

The Primary Care Respiratory Society UK (PCRS-UK) is grateful to AstraZeneca UK Ltd, Boehringer Ingelheim Ltd/Pfizer Ltd, Chiesi Ltd, GlaxoSmithKline, MSD UK, Napp Pharmaceuticals and Teva UK Ltd for the provision of educational grants to establish the development of the PCRS-UK Quality Improvement Programmes and its resources. The PCRS-UK wishes to acknowledge the support of AstraZeneca UK Ltd, Boehringer Ingelheim Ltd, Chiesi Ltd and GlaxoSmithKline in the continued development of this programme in 2014.

Correct at date of revision: May 2015.

Sponsorship details correct at time of publication



