Importance of Physical Activity in managing COPD

There is no cure for COPD, but most patients can manage their COPD with the right medication and treatment plan.¹

Managing COPD

Important treatment goals²

- Prevent disease progression
- Relieve symptoms
- Improve exercise tolerance

Exercise Tolerance

Activity-related breathlessness is a characteristic feature of COPD.³ This can impact the ability to perform physical activities and have a detrimental effect on quality of life.⁴

- It limits patients’ exercise tolerance and impacts on their daily activities, leading to a downward spiral of exercise avoidance and physical decline.⁵,⁶
- Decreased activity can increase breathlessness during even low levels of activity, leading to further worsening of the condition, and ultimately increasing the risk of disability and death.⁶

The internationally-recognised GOLD 2018 strategy recommends maintaining or increasing physical activity for all COPD patients, regardless of disease severity.⁶

Importance of Physical Activity

Engaging in daily physical activity can help:⁷

- Minimise the impact of the disease on their daily lives
- Prevent deconditioning of the muscles
- Improve symptoms such as breathlessness and fatigue
- Slow down the damage to their lungs

People living with COPD should be encouraged to take an active role in their own treatment and participate in physical activity as often as possible.⁶,⁸,⁹

Different patients have varying severities of COPD, and so the type of physical activity they can perform will depend on the individual.

Developing a Management Plan

A joint healthcare professional-patient approach to developing a management plan, including non-pharmacological strategies and pharmacological strategies can help improve exercise tolerance and quality of life for people living with COPD.¹⁰

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