

MedicineInsight GP Snapshot Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Insights from the national MedicineInsight Program show how COPD management compares with aspects of the COPD Clinical Care Standard. Participating practices will receive a report based on their practice data in early 2025.

MEDICINEINSIGHT DATA – PATIENTS OVER 35 YEARS

An estimated
39,000
patients diagnosed
with COPD



25% of patients with
COPD currently smoke
compared to 9% of all patients

SPIROMETRY

Around
2 IN 5
patients with COPD had a
spirometry test

Practice point: COPD cannot be accurately diagnosed based on clinical features or chest x-ray alone.

Conduct spirometry for:

- Patients over 35 with symptoms and at least one COPD risk factor
- Patients diagnosed with COPD who have not had a test before.

INFLUENZA VACCINATION



83% of patients with
COPD have received an
influenza vaccination

Practice point: Offer all patients with COPD an annual influenza vaccination.

- Consider other vaccinations including pneumococcal disease
- Also check vaccinations according to their medical history, age and the Australian Immunisation Handbook.

SMOKING STATUS AND CESSATION ADVICE

96% of patients with COPD had
their smoking status recorded

61% of patients with COPD who
smoke were recorded to have been
offered smoking cessation advice

Practice point: Update your patients' smoking status at least annually.

The most effective way to manage smoking cessation is through a combination of strategies including:

- Behavioural support and counselling (e.g., referral to Quitline)
- Pharmacotherapy (e.g., nicotine replacement therapy, bupropion or varenicline).¹

Spotlight on COPD

In 2024-25, the Commission is releasing a range of COPD-focused resources to support you and your practice.

MedicineInsight Practice Reports:

- **MedicineInsight Practice Reports** – Participating practices will receive customised reports to help them compare their data with the best care and results at a local, regional and national level.
- Individual general practice reports supporting quality improvement activities at a practitioner level.
- **Practice Reflections** – GPs will receive Practice Reflections from 2025, a new initiative building on the previous NPS MedicineWise Practice Review program. The first edition will provide individualised insights on spirometry.

Commission COPD related resources

- **Healthcare Variation Focus Report** – The upcoming interactive COPD Report from the Commission’s Atlas of Healthcare Variation series will analyse national datasets, including Medicare and PBS. This report will compare spirometry testing and medication management by geographical area. While MedicineInsight looks at individual clinical care patterns, the Atlas data will reveal how care changes over time and across different regions. It will also discuss data discrepancies, challenges to achieving the best care, and possible solutions.
- **The COPD Clinical Care Standard** – Released in October 2024, outlines the main care components that all Australians with COPD should receive. It comprises ten quality statements focused on diagnosis, comprehensive assessment, education and self-management, vaccination and smoking cessation, pulmonary rehabilitation, pharmacological management, oxygen and ventilatory support during exacerbations, follow-up care after hospitalisation, and symptom support and palliative care. Find out more at safetyandquality.gov.au/copd-ccs.

Upcoming MedicineInsight topics

Participating in MedicineInsight gives you access to upcoming reports on:

- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- Low Back Pain: Imaging practices and opioid use in primary care.

PROGRAM BENEFITS	
Gain CPD Points	Use the clinical improvement guide in upcoming Practice Reports to earn CPD points while enhancing your COPD clinical skills
Research	Contribute to primary care data available for research studies and informing policy

Find out more at safetyandquality.gov.au/MedicineInsight

1 Yang I, George J, McDonald C, McDonald V, Ordman R, Goodwin A, et al. The COPD-X plan: Australian and New Zealand guidelines for the management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease 2024. Version 2.75. [Internet]. Brisbane: Lung Foundation Australia; 2024. Available from: copdx.org.au/copd-x-plan.