

CLAHRCBITE

Brokering innovation through evidence

COPD and the value of patients' illness narratives



Results

The accounts of people living with COPD are shaped by their social situation and physical condition.

Who needs to know?

Clinicians dealing with COPD patients, and those seeking to invoke lifestyle changes in smoking behaviour and physical activity levels.

What did we do:

A cohort of COPD patients participated in a research study including questionnaires (covering demographics, smoking history, perceptions of health), physical measurements (blood pressure, spirometry, skeletal muscle strength, exercise capacity and physical activity), and semi-structured interviews.

What we found and what does this mean:

Interviewees were categorised into four groups based on their differing view on managing COPD and the impact that it was having on their daily lives: chaos; challenge; contrary; and coping. A person's willingness to embark on lifestyle modification was influenced by their physical capability (e.g. coexisting conditions and lung function) and socio-demographic factors (e.g. age and wealth). Consequently both need to be also considered when discussing self-management.

What next:

The results from this research show the importance that patient narratives can play in understanding the varied reactions patients will have to a diagnosis. Thus illness narratives are of fundamental value to practitioners seeking to invoke lifestyle changes in patients. Further research is required to explore how the accounts presented during clinical consultations relate to patients' behaviour within and beyond the clinical context.

Evidence:

Malcolm D, Orme MW, Morgan MD, Sherar LB. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), illness narratives and Elias's sociology of knowledge. *Soc Sci Med.* 2017;192:58-65. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.09.022>

What is NIHR CLAHRC EM?

NIHR Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRCs) are collaborations between the NHS, universities and local organisations. Our goals are to conduct applied health research across the East Midlands and translate our research findings into improved outcomes for the public.

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