



National Prescribing Service Limited

Media Release

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NPS distills key points for medicines management of COPD

Quality use of medicines recommendations in the latest *NPS News: Managing COPD and preventing progression* focus on supporting health professionals to manage patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

While many health professionals recognise the most important intervention to prevent or slow progression of COPD is smoking cessation, NPS's recent needs assessment has identified that prescribers and other health professionals will benefit from clarification of the roles of long-acting bronchodilators, inhaled corticosteroids in stable COPD and use of antibiotics during acute exacerbations.

NPS News also highlights the best practice key of early diagnosis and the use of spirometry to confirm diagnosis.

Chronic cough, sputum production and dyspnoea are usually absent in early stages of the disease and consideration of a COPD diagnosis for all current and ex-smokers over the age of 35 years is recommended.

NPS's mid-year educational visiting topic of COPD: *Interventions for better outcomes* details best practice in use of bronchodilators, starting with short-acting bronchodilators and the introduction of longer acting therapies including tiotropium to control symptoms. The use of inhaled corticosteroids in patients with moderate to severe disease and 2 or more annual exacerbations is also recommended as a consideration

"Slowing the decline in lung function through best use of medicines will reduce symptoms and have a positive impact on patients, carers and families" said Dr Richard Abbott, General Practitioner, Scone NSW and NPS Director.

"Although irreversible, early diagnosis and good GP management for maintenance and exacerbations and the reduction or elimination of preventable risk factors offers the best quality of life and outcome for our patients" Dr Abbott concluded.

Information on GP and pharmacist clinical audits, and copies of the *NPS News* and case study 42: *Managing COPD exacerbations* is currently available at www.nps.org.au/healthpro. Interested GPs can get further information on the upcoming COPD educational visiting program from NPS Facilitators in the 90 participating divisions of general practice.

NPS is an independent, non-profit organisation for Quality Use of Medicines. We provide accurate, balanced, evidence-based information and services to help people choose if, when and how to use medicines to improve their health and wellbeing. We are member-based and work in partnership with health professionals, government, pharmaceutical industry and consumers. NPS is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

For further information contact Anna Karelis on 02 8217 8700 (bh), 0419 618 365 (media mobile), akarelis@nps.org.au or visit our website www.nps.org.au