

## Patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Feelings of Uncertainty

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**Abstract :** It has been reported that COPD -patients may experience much emotional distress, which can compromise positive health outcomes. The aim of this study was to explore disease-related uncertainty as reported by Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) patients. Uncertainty was defined as a lack of confidence; negative feelings; a sense of confidence; and awareness of the sources of uncertainty. Research design was a non-experimental cross-sectional survey. The data (n=141) was collected by validated questionnaire during COPD -patients' visits or admissions to a tertiary hospital. The response rate was 62%. The data was analyzed by statistical methods. Around 70% of the participants were male with COPD diagnosed many years ago. Fifty-four percent were under 65 years and used an electronic respiratory aid apparatus (52%) (oxygen concentrator, ventilator or electronic inhalation device). Forty-one percent of the participants smoked. Disease-related uncertainty was widely reported. Seventy-three percent of the participants had uncertainty about their knowledge of the disease, the pulmonary medication and nutrition. One-quarter (25%) did not feel sure about managing COPD exacerbation. About forty percent (43%) reported that they did not have a written exacerbation decision aid indicating how to act in relation to COPD symptoms. Over half of the respondents were uncertain about self-management behavior related to health habits such as exercise and nutrition. Over a third of the participants (37%) felt uncertain about self-management skills related to giving up smoking. Support from the care providers was correlated significantly with the patients' sense of confidence. COPD -patients who felt no confidence stated that they received significantly less support in care. Disease-related uncertainty should be considered more closely and broadly in the patient care context, and those strategies within patient education that enhance adherence should be strengthened and incorporated into standard practice.

**Keywords :** adherence, COPD, disease-management, uncertainty

**Conference Title :** ICN 2016 : International Conference on Nursing

**Conference Location :** London, United Kingdom

**Conference Dates :** September 29-30, 2016