



Factsheet – NZ COPD Guidelines

Prepared for the release of the first-ever NZ COPD Guidelines to be published in the New Zealand Medical Journal on Friday 19 February 2021.

About Asthma and Respiratory Foundation NZ

ARFNZ are New Zealand's not-for-profit sector authority on all respiratory conditions including asthma, bronchiectasis, childhood bronchiolitis, childhood pneumonia, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Based in Wellington, the core team develops guidelines, tools and training to support healthcare professionals, works to influence policy to improve respiratory health, educates children through asthma education in schools, provides information to support the respiratory community, and partners with researchers, community groups and like-minded businesses to deliver key activity and messages.

What is COPD?

Affecting more than 15% of New Zealand adults over the age of 45, and encompassing emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and chronic airflow obstruction, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is irreversible and usually progressive.

COPD is a long-term, irreversible condition that is characterised by a chronic productive wet cough (often referred to as a 'smokers cough'), breathlessness and wheezing.

The causes of COPD include: smoking (90% of COPD cases are smoking related); airborne irritants and pollution; a particular genetic disease call alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency.

People with COPD are more at risk to severe illness from contracting COVID-19, as listed on the [Ministry of Health's website](#) of severe underlying medical conditions.

About the first-ever NZ COPD Guidelines

- The Guidelines will be used by medical professionals to aid in diagnosis and management of COPD patients in New Zealand.
- The guidelines have been developed by the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation's (ARFNZ) working group of respiratory health experts led by ARFNZ Medical Director Dr Stuart Jones from Middlemore Hospital and Professor Bob Hancox from the University of Otago and will be published in the New Zealand Medical Journal on **Friday 19 February, 2021**
- The publication of these guidelines, with their evidenced-based standards of care, have a goal of improving diagnosis, assessment, and management of COPD for all New Zealanders living with this respiratory disease.
- Medication does help to control and relieve the symptoms of COPD, however, cultural considerations and the importance of non-pharmacological management of COPD are key

aspects of the guidelines that make them relevant to New Zealand healthcare practice. Examples include:

- Stopping smoking
- Continuing physical activity
- Pulmonary Rehabilitation
- Breathlessness management strategies including breathing exercises and hand-held fan therapy
- Nutrition

Key stats – COPD in New Zealand

- Each year, more than 10,000 New Zealanders are hospitalised due to COPD
- COPD affects more than 15% of New Zealand adults over the age of 45
- You're more than five times likely to be hospitalised with COPD if you live in a deprived area and more than two times more likely to die from COPD

Māori and Pacific people

- Māori are 3.5 times more likely to be hospitalised with COPD and more than 2 times as likely to die from COPD than other New Zealanders
- Pacific people are 2.7 times more likely to be hospitalised with COPD

Mortality

- A large proportion of COPD deaths are not recorded as such because of misreporting or a co-morbidity (e.g. heart failure or pneumonia) being the final cause of death
- Even with under-reporting, COPD is still the fourth leading cause of death after ischaemic heart disease, stroke and lung cancer

Sources:

The Impact of Respiratory Disease in New Zealand: 2018 update; Barnard & Zhang, 2018.
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and Lung Cancer in New Zealand; Broad & Jackson, 2003

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Contacts available for interviews are:

Professor Bob Hancox – Lead Author of the NZ COPD Guidelines, Consultant Respiratory Physician. At Waikato DHB, member of ARFNZ's Scientific Advisory Board

Dr Stuart Jones – Author of the NZ COPD Guidelines, ARFNZ Medical Director, Consultant Respiratory/Sleep Physician at Counties Manukau DHB and Chair of ARFNZ's Scientific Advisory Board

Letitia Harding – Chief Executive, Asthma and Respiratory Foundation NZ

Sir John Clarke – Chief Cultural Advisor, Māori
Can be interviewed in either Te Reo Māori or in English