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Title

Barriers and motivational factors towards physical activity in COPD - an interview based pilot study

Authors

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Background: Surprisingly few people in Denmark with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) engage in physical activity even though it is evident that pulmonary rehabilitation has positive effects on activity level, dyspnea, anxiety, fatigue and quality of life.

Aims: To explore why people with COPD do not engage in physical activity and their motivational factors for being physically active.

Methods: Fieldwork among five people with COPD in Jutland, Denmark 2013-2016 using qualitative semi-structured interviews. Supplementary short semistructured interviews with three general practitioners, and participation in a closed Facebook-group for people with COPD.

Results: Preliminary findings reveal that one main reason for not being physical active before rather late in the course of COPD was that people with COPD did not receive the necessary information from the general practitioners about the benefits of physical training neither the negative consequences of an inactive lifestyle.

Motivational factors for living a physically active life were first of all information about COPD and the benefits of physical training, secondly to experience the benefits on one's own body ("I get more energy when I train"). Other motivational factors were to experience that it was not dangerous to feel breathless and to have success coping with breathlessness.

Functional tests were very important for persons with COPD because they showed the positive progress and were much easier to comprehend than spirometry tests.

Conclusion: It is of paramount importance that people with COPD, first of all and as early as possible receive information about the benefits of physical activity, and secondly experience the benefits of physical training on their own body. Physical training moves mountains in COPD.

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Trial registration

Our work was approved by: The Central Denmark Region Committee on Biomedical Research Ethics, Skottenborg 26, Postboks 21, DK-8800 Viborg, Denmark.