

# A CBT intervention to reduce anxiety, depression and breathlessness in people with COPD

NHS Grampian, Scotland

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## Background

In Scotland, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is the third most common reason for admission to hospital and has the highest readmission rate.<sup>1</sup> Several potentially modifiable factors have been linked to admissions and readmissions including lack of physical activity,<sup>2</sup> anxiety and depression.<sup>3</sup> A Trainee Health Psychologist was employed in NHS Grampian to develop strategies that may increase COPD patients' wellbeing, thereby reducing hospital admissions and readmissions as a result of COPD exacerbations.

## Aim

To develop an intervention to reduce anxiety, depression & breathlessness in COPD patients.

## What we did

- Conducted qualitative interviews with hospital and community staff and patients.
- Developed an intervention informed by this information as well as theory and evidence.
- Nurses and doctors on the ward identified patients whose admission to hospital appeared to be driven by anxiety and/or depression.
- Delivered a one-to-one CBT-based intervention, following an assessment, to people in their homes once discharged from hospital.
- The psychological assessment often identified a range of needs, so we also facilitated engagement of a variety of other services e.g. social work, befriending networks, and pulmonary rehabilitation.
- Number of hospital admissions and bed days were calculated 3 months pre and post intervention.

## Impact

- Seventeen people took part in the intervention over 12 months.
- The mean number of appointments was 6.
- Based on 8 people with follow up data, hospital admissions were reduced by 50% and bed days by 58% following the intervention, representing a cost saving of £51,220 or £6,402.50 per person.

## Conclusions and recommendations

A brief, home-delivered CBT intervention was effective in substantially reducing admissions in people with marked COPD. It is likely that this type of intervention will generate significant cost savings and improve the quality of life in people admitted and readmitted with COPD.

## Further Information

Clayton, H., Keen, A. & Cowie, L. (2016) Reducing COPD admissions: using a brief psychological intervention to reduce emergency healthcare use, support living in the community and improve emotional wellbeing. NHS Grampian report (available from author).

## References

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