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Title: The prevalence of undiagnosed COPD and approaches to promote early COPD diagnosis in lung cancer population

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Body: Background Chronic obstructive disease (COPD) is a risk factor and important co-existing disease for lung cancer, however, the current status of diagnosis and treatment of COPD in lung cancer population are not fully described. This study was designed to address this issue in a general teaching hospital in China. Methods Medical records of the hospitalized patients with lung cancer in Zhongshan Hospital, Fudan University from Jan 2006 to Dec 2010 were reviewed. The co-morbid of COPD were confirmed by the spirometric results according to GOLD definition. The diagnostic rate and the rate of appropriate treatment was analyzed. Results During the study period, the prevalence of COPD in hospitalized lung cancer patients was 21.6% (705/3263). The diagnostic rate of COPD in lung cancer patients was 7.1%, and the rate of appropriate treatment for stable and acute exacerbation of COPD was 27.1% and 46.8% respectively. Respiratory physicians had a higher diagnostic rate than non-respiratory doctors (34.8% vs 2.9%, $p<0.001$), and a better compliance with GOLD guidelines of the treatment for acute exacerbation of COPD (63.6% vs 37.5%, $p=0.048$). Accurate diagnosis significantly increased the guideline-compliant treatment. The diagnostic rate was higher among patients with history of tobacco exposure, respiratory diseases, or respiratory symptoms. Conclusions COPD is substantially underdiagnosed and undertreated in hospitalized lung cancer population. History of smoking, respiratory diseases, or respiratory symptoms will promote the diagnosis of the disease. Education among patients and doctors and improvement of disease management are urgently required in this special population.