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**Title:** COPD-mortality, a two years retrospective study

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**Body:** Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a disease with increasing prevalence and mortality. In Sweden approximately 3000 individuals die every year as a consequence of COPD. Aim To describe the disease and the care of COPD patients during their last two years. The aim was also to find out whether there are gender and/or regional differences with regard to terminal COPD care in Sweden. Method Retrospective collection of data from patients records from all patients who died due to COPD in 2003 and 2004, in one urban and one rural area, covering 19% of the total Swedish population. A questionnaire was developed for collection of information. Results Out of 822 deaths from COPD, sufficient information was found for 729 (89%) of the patients who died in 2003-2004 with COPD as the underlying cause of death. Median disease duration was 6.0 (range 0-36) years with no difference by gender or area and the diagnosis was based on lung function measurement in 47% of the patients. Median age at death was 78 (range 52-96) years in women and 80 (51-99) in men (corresponding figures for all who died 2003 in Sweden were, 82.6 and 78.1, respectively). The proportion of current smokers at the time of death was 41% in women and 33% in men (p=0.02). Most of the patients died at hospital (68%) while 13% died at home. Care days during the two last years were in average 23 days and in 63% of the patients a history of one or more exacerbations were reported. Conclusions In Sweden women become 4 years older than men but women with COPD had shorter length of life than had men. This indicates a faster COPD-course in women. The generally high length of life together with short time with COPD diagnosis, indicate that the diagnosis of COPD is made late.