**RESEARCH LETTER**

**Daily physical activity in subjects with newly diagnosed COPD**

**Rationale** Information about daily physical activity levels (PAL) in subjects with undiagnosed chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is scarce. This study aims to assess PA and to investigate the associations between PA and clinical characteristics in subjects with newly diagnosed COPD.

**Methods** Fifty-nine subjects with a new spirometry-based diagnosis of mild (n=38) and moderate (n=21) COPD (63±6 years, 68% male) were matched with 65 smoking controls (62±7 years, 75% male). PA (daily steps, time spent in moderate-to-vigorous intense physical activities (MVPA) and PAL) was measured by accelerometry. Dyspnoea, complete pulmonary function tests, peripheral muscle strength and exercise capacity served as clinical characteristics.

**Results** PA was significantly lower in COPD versus smoking controls (7986±2648 vs 9765±3078 steps, 64 (27–120) vs 110 (55–164) min of MVPA, 1.49±0.21 vs 1.62±0.24 PAL respectively, all p<0.05). Subjects with COPD with either mild symptoms of dyspnoea (mMRC 1), those with lower diffusion capacity (TL,co), low 6 min walking distance (6MWD) or low maximal oxygen uptake (VO2 peak) had significantly lower PA. Multiple regression analysis identified 6MWD and TL,co as independent predictors of PA in COPD.

**Conclusions** The reduction in PA starts early in the disease, even when subjects are not yet diagnosed with COPD. Inactivity is more pronounced in subjects with mild symptoms of dyspnoea, lower levels of diffusion capacity and exercise capacity.

The detection of an inactive lifestyle in patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is increasingly important since inactivity predicts prognosis in COPD and may even impact on the rate of lung function decline. Data on daily physical activity levels (PAL) are lacking regarding patients unaware of their disease in whom the diagnosis of COPD is based on spirometry screening (preclinical stage). We aimed to objectively investigate daily PALs and to investigate the association between physical activity and different clinical characteristics in subjects with newly spirometry-based diagnosis of COPD.

Hundred and twenty-four (ex-) smokers were recruited from a population-based sample (see online supplementary figure S1). Fifty-nine subjects with a new spirometry-based diagnosis of mild (n=38) and moderate (n=21) COPD (63±6 years, 68% male) were matched with 65 smoking controls (62±7 years, 75% male). Detailed characteristics of the study subjects are summarised in online supplementary table S1. Physical activity (daily steps, time spent in moderate-to-vigorous intense physical activities (MVPA) and PAL) was measured by a multi-sensor activity monitor (SenseWear Pro 3 Armband). Dyspnoea, complete pulmonary function tests, peripheral muscle strength and exercise capacity served as clinical characteristics. Additional information on material and methods is available in the online supplementary.

We found that physical activity was significantly lower in COPD compared to smoking controls (figure 1). Subjects with COPD with either mild symptoms of dyspnoea (mMRC 1), those with lower diffusion capacity (TL,co), low 6 min walking distance (6MWD) or low maximal oxygen uptake (VO2 peak) had significantly lower PALs.

**Figure 1** Daily physical activity levels (PAL) in subjects with and without chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD); daily steps (A) 7986±2648 vs 9765±3078 steps, daily time spent in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) (B) 64 (27–120) vs 110 (55–164) min of MVPA and daily PAL (C): 1.49±0.21 vs 1.62±0.24 PAL. *p<0.05 COPD versus smoking controls.
diagnosed with COPD, especially in those with mild symptoms of dyspnoea,lower levels of diffusion capacity and exercise capacity.

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