

Health coaches improve inhaler use in COPD patients

March 13 2020



(HealthDay)—Lay health coaches may improve inhaler technique and

adherence for low-income patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), according to a study published in the January/February issue of the *Annals of Family Medicine*.

Rachel Willard-Grace, M.P.H., from the University of California in San Francisco, and colleagues evaluated the effect of lay health coaches to improve inhaler adherence and technique among patients with moderate-to-severe COPD. Patients treated in urban, public primary care clinics serving a [low-income](#), predominantly African-American population, were randomly assigned to receive nine months of health coaching or usual care.

The researchers found that baseline adherence and [inhaler technique](#) were uniformly poor across both groups. Health-coached patients reported a greater number of days of adherence versus usual care patients (6.4 versus 5.5 days) and were more likely to have used their controller inhalers as prescribed for five of the last seven days (90 versus 69 percent) at the end of the study period. Additionally, coached patients were more than three times as likely to demonstrate perfect technique for all inhaler devices (24 versus 7 percent) and mastery of essential steps (40 versus 11 percent).

"Health coaching may provide a scalable model that can improve care for people living with COPD," the authors write.

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Citation: Health coaches improve inhaler use in COPD patients (2020, March 13) retrieved 9 October 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-03-health-inhaler-copd-patients.html>

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