



Routes to impact: ‘Support Needs Approach for Patients’ – person-centred care for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a progressive respiratory condition that requires significant care at the end of life with an estimated cost to the NHS of around £1.9 billion per year¹. As such, improved support for patients is required, with person-centred care considered the best way to ensure people’s needs are identified and met, but in practice this has been shown to be challenging.

To overcome the barriers to implementing this type of care, the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) School for Primary Care Research invested in the development of an intervention called Support Needs Approach for Patients (SNAP). Consisting of a copyrighted tool comprising of 15 evidence-based questions to help patients identify areas they might need support in, such as help managing symptoms or access to financial benefits, and a needs-led conversation with a healthcare professional informed by their completed SNAP tool.

SNAP is a direct response to one of the six key recommendations of the Living with Breathlessness study which was co-funded by a previous Marie Curie research grant and a NIHR Career Development Fellowship². The researchers also received further funding for £149,622 in 2018 from the NIHR to take forward their work from the Living with Breathlessness study³.

Led by Professor Morag Farquhar at the University of East Anglia, and Carole Gardener and Dr Gail Ewing at the University of Cambridge, Marie Curie funded the second phase of the SNAP programme to validate the tool, improve its design and content, develop an accompanying training and support package for the SNAP intervention, and bring SNAP into clinical practice. In 2018/19, the study recruited 63 patients and 24

members of staff and the team have published two research papers^{4,5}. The researchers were also awarded further funding from the Economic and Social Research Council for £4,984 to produce a website for SNAP⁶.

SNAP has now been used in a range of clinical settings including primary, community and secondary care, and there have been requests to translate the tool into multiple languages. The Taskforce for Lung Health, led by the British Lung Foundation, specifically suggested SNAP as an intervention to identify and address unmet support needs of patients in their five-year plan for lung health⁷.

It has been similarly recommended in the Royal College of General Practitioners and Marie Curie Daffodil Standards⁸. Going forward, SNAP has the potential to be applied to other progressive incurable conditions such as heart failure, neurological conditions and cancer.

1. The battle for breath - the economic burden of lung disease (2017) British Lung Foundation, Available at: blf.org.uk/policy/economic-burden
2. Living with Breathlessness (2012) Available at: phpc.cam.ac.uk/pcu/research/research-projects-list/living-with-breathlessness-study/
3. Development, refinement, and acceptability of an educational intervention for informal carers of patients with breathlessness in advanced disease (Learning about Breathlessness Study 2: LaB2) (2018) Available at: fundingawards.nih.ac.uk/award/PB-PG-1216-20022
4. Mi E, Mi E, Ewing G, White P, Mahadeva R, Gardener AC, Farquhar M (2018) Do patients and carers agree on symptom burden in advanced COPD? Int J Chron Obstruct Pulmon Dis. 22;13:969-977. Available at: ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5868585/
5. Gardener AC, Ewing G, Kuhn I, Farquhar M (2018) Support needs of patients with COPD: a systematic literature search and narrative review Int J Chron Obstruct Pulmon Dis. 26;13:1021-1035. Available at: ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5877489/
6. The Support Needs Approach for Patients (SNAP) (2018). Available at: thesnap.org.uk/
7. Right care in the last year of life: giving patients choice, The Taskforce for Lung Health, Available at: blf.org.uk/taskforce/plan/end-of-life/choice
8. Daffodil Standards for GPs, Marie Curie, Available at: mariecurie.org.uk/professionals/working-in-partnership/royal-college-of-gps/daffodil-standards

Marie Curie is the largest charitable funder of palliative and end of life care research. The charity invests nearly £3 million each year into research to help inform better quality of care for people with any terminal illness, and the people who care for them.

**For more information contact:
research.info@mariecurie.org.uk**