



## The Global Burden of COPD: An International Call to Action

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### Background

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a fatal lung disease characterised by progressive and irreversible airflow limitation.<sup>1</sup> Every hour, COPD is estimated to kill over 250 people worldwide<sup>2</sup> and the annual death rate from the disease is greater than that of lung cancer and breast cancer combined.<sup>2,3</sup>

Morbidity and mortality from COPD are considerable, and increasing. By the year 2020, COPD is predicted to become the third leading cause of death worldwide (exceeded only by heart disease and stroke).<sup>4,5,6,7</sup>

To date, numerous important initiatives have made significant progress in addressing the burden of COPD. These include the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) guidelines for the effective diagnosis and management of COPD,<sup>1</sup> the annual World COPD Day, and the World Health Organization's recently announced Global Alliance Against Chronic Respiratory Diseases (GARD).

Despite these efforts, COPD remains under-recognised, under-acknowledged and under-treated.<sup>8,9</sup> Between 9% and 30% of patients could be undiagnosed despite having symptoms consistent with COPD, and many do not receive appropriate treatment and management.<sup>10,11</sup>

The Global Burden of COPD Summit (chaired by Professor Leonardo Fabbri MD, Modena, Italy) was convened to raise awareness and increase efforts to address the growing impact COPD is set to have on global health.

### References:

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## The Global Burden of COPD Call to Action

Participants of the Global Burden of COPD Summit call on healthcare professionals, healthcare providers, non-government organisations (NGOs) and governments to take the following actions to address the growing burden of COPD and its rising mortality rate:

### 1. Increase awareness and understanding of COPD and its co-morbidities

- among healthcare professionals, healthcare providers, patients, carers, advocacy groups, NGOs, governments, payors and other interested parties
- through increased research into the causes and consequences of optimal management of COPD and its co-morbidities
- through increased education programmes for healthcare professionals, patients, carers and the public

### 2. Increase access to early and accurate diagnosis, leading to effective management and treatment for all patients with COPD

- through improved implementation of published COPD guidelines
- through identification and resolution of economic and political factors which limit provision of effective management and treatment

### 3. Increase efforts to prevent COPD and its growing mortality burden

- through public education programmes on COPD prevention
- through minimisation of COPD risk factors

## Supporters of the Global Burden of COPD Call to Action



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