

One stop shop for pulmonary rehab

A new online toolkit for health professionals working in pulmonary rehabilitation provides evidence-based information on current best practice for the practical management of patients referred for pulmonary rehabilitation.

Developed jointly by the Australian Lung Foundation and the Australian Physiotherapy Association, the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Toolkit is a resource for health practitioners to establish pulmonary rehabilitation programs in metropolitan, regional and rural settings throughout Australia.

Pulmonary rehabilitation programs are suitable for people who have underlying chronic lung disease and who are limited by dyspnoea (sensation of breathlessness). The information and practical resources in the toolkit address the primary aims of pulmonary rehabilitation, which are to reduce the disability and handicap of people with chronic lung diseases, and to restore patients to the highest possible level of independent functioning.

“Pulmonary rehabilitation should be part of the care continuum for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD),” said APA president, Cathy Nall, who practices in cardiorespiratory physiotherapy at the Austin Hospital, Melbourne.

“An increase in the number of pulmonary rehabilitation programs around Australia is needed due to the high prevalence of COPD and the associated increasing healthcare costs,” Ms Nall said.

Heather Allan, Executive Director of The Australian Lung Foundation’s COPD National Program, said: “Pulmonary rehabilitation is proven to have a significant effect in improving exercise performance, breathlessness, psychological wellbeing and fatigue in patients with COPD. However one of the great barriers to allowing access to pulmonary rehab has been availability of programs. We hope that this toolkit will encourage the establishment of more programs, particularly in rural settings.”

The primary components of a comprehensive program, and which are resourced in the online toolkit, are:

1. Patient assessment
2. Patient exercise training
3. Patient education
4. Program evaluation
5. Maintenance

Incorporating these components in a self-management framework for the patient encourages their ongoing adherence and can improve their psychosocial wellbeing and independence.

More information: The Pulmonary Rehabilitation Toolkit is freely available at www.pulmonaryrehab.com.au

Find A Physio Search online for a cardiorespiratory physiotherapist in your local area, www.physiotherapy.asn.au

Cardiorespiratory Physiotherapy Australia (CPA)

Nearly 300 physiotherapists belong to the APA's national group, Cardiorespiratory Physiotherapy Australia. These physiotherapists have a special interest in cardiorespiratory conditions and work to improve quality of life by maximising functional independence. Cardiorespiratory physiotherapists assist patients to recover after surgery, prescribe exercise to improve fitness and strength, educate people about their condition, and promote a healthy lifestyle.

Cardiorespiratory physiotherapists work in a variety of areas, including: pulmonary rehabilitation; respiratory medicine; sleep medicine; home-based rehabilitation; community health; intensive care; abdominal and cardiothoracic surgery; cardiac rehabilitation; paediatrics; and, research and education.

Australian Lung Foundation

The Australian Lung Foundation is a Public Benevolent Institution committed to reducing the burden of lung disease in Australia.

For further information, contact: 1800 654 301 or www.lungnet.com.au.