

Provincial PFT Recommendations Project

What are the objectives of the Provincial PFT Recommendations Project?

- To develop approaches and information to guide selection of the “right” Pulmonary Function Test (PFT) for the “right” reason for the “right” patient
- Improve family physicians’ awareness, confidence, and consistency in selecting the most prudent lung tests for the most common pulmonary presentations encountered in primary care
- Impetus:
 - Requested by Alberta’s family physicians
 - Evidence-based guidelines are lacking
 - Referral processes and testing terms are varied and inconsistent
 - Choosing Wisely
 - Misdiagnosis resulting from lack of objective measures

Why does this matter?

- Over **600,000** Albertans have a current diagnosis of asthma or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) (*Alberta Health Interactive Health Data Application (2019)*)
- An estimated **20-70%** of patients are undiagnosed due to the underuse of post-bronchodilator spirometry*
- In **33%** of Canadian adults seen by a specialist, asthma couldn’t be established objectively despite a recent physician diagnosis*
- Up to **6%** of patients diagnosed with asthma instead had an unrecognized **serious cardiorespiratory condition***

**Aaron SD et al. Underdiagnosis and Overdiagnosis of Asthma. 2018*

What are the recommendations for common pulmonary presentations in Primary Care?

- Asthma - **Spirometry**
- COPD - **Spirometry**
- Chronic (or subacute) cough - **Spirometry**
- Interstitial lung disease – Full PFT
- Undifferentiated shortness of breath – Full PFT

Practice Reflections

- Consider ordering of appropriate objective measure of lung function testing before a trial of medication as per recommendations
- Consider accessing *Netcare* to find lung testing results
- Consider use of the HQCA Panel Report for Asthma; visit request.hqca.ca to sign up online

For more information please contact: MedicineSCN@albertahealthservices.ca

