

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) & Asthma Overlap

WHAT IS COPD?

A common, preventable and treatable multi-system disease characterised by:

- Persistent respiratory symptoms
- Persistent airflow limitation
- Airway and/or alveolar abnormalities
- Usually caused by exposure to noxious particles or gases



HOW DOES IT RELATE TO ASTHMA?

People with features of both asthma & COPD have:

- More frequent attacks
- Higher healthcare use
- Higher mortality
- Worse quality of life



PREVALENCE

30% ALSO
OF ADULTS WITH COPD **HAVE ASTHMA**
(AND VICE VERSA)

DIAGNOSIS & ASSESSMENT

A stepwise approach is recommended that identifies disease characteristics of asthma, COPD or both

Feature	Asthma	COPD
Age of onset	<20 years	>35 - 40 years
Symptom pattern	Variable Worse at night	Persistent
Lung function	Variable limitation	Persistent limitation (FEV1/ FVC <0.7)
History	Family history of asthma / allergy	Heavy exposure to noxious particles
Time course	Seasonal variation No worsening over time	Progressive worsening
Chest X-ray	Normal	Hyperinflation

TREATMENT

NOTE: Long acting beta agonists (LABAs) without ICS are not recommended for overlapping asthma & COPD

Options include:

- LABA + ICS
- Long-acting muscarinic agonists (LAMAs)
- Pulmonary rehabilitation
- Add-on therapy

