

COPD in South Asian Females-A Neglected Entity

Abstract:

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, yet its impact on South Asian females remains under recognized. Traditionally labeled as a disease of male smokers, COPD in women is often overlooked due to gender bias, socio-cultural barriers, and under diagnosis. In South Asia, unique risk factors such as prolonged exposure to biomass fuel in poorly ventilated kitchens, second-hand smoke from male family members, and increasing tobacco use among women contribute significantly to disease burden. Females with COPD often present with more severe dyspnoea, anxiety, and functional impairment, yet have limited access to timely diagnosis and effective therapy. Social stigma, poor utilization of spirometry, and lack of gender-sensitive health programs further compound the problem. This neglected entity not only affects the quality of life of women but also imposes a considerable socioeconomic burden on families and healthcare systems. Recognizing COPD in South Asian females as a distinct and vulnerable group is essential for improving early detection, optimizing management, and developing targeted public health interventions.

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