

Development of a Nationwide Accessible Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program in India

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Abstract

Pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) has emerged as a valuable nonpharmacological intervention that encompasses exercise training, education, nutritional counseling, and psychosocial support for chronic respiratory diseases (CRDs). Implementing a nationwide accessible PR program is vital for improving health outcomes and promoting healthier lifestyles through preventive measures and comprehensive management strategies for individuals with respiratory conditions. The first structured nationwide PR program in India was initiated in 2022. Details of its evolution and outcomes are presented here. The program involves a team of 113 PR therapists across 84 cities in India. The PR program components include patient assessment, exercise training, education, and psychosocial rehabilitation. Since its inception from April 2022 to July 2024, 27,402 patients have been enrolled. The most common diagnoses were chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma (32% each), followed by interstitial lung disease (8%), and others (28%). Learnings from this first nationwide structured PR program will lay the foundation for future initiatives in this realm.

Keywords: Asthma; Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease; Health Care; India; Pulmonary Rehabilitation