



Atlas of Healthcare Variation Consumer summary | Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in people aged 45 years or over

The Atlas of Healthcare Variation is a website that uses maps, graphs, tables and words to show differences in health care in New Zealand by Health New Zealand district. The Atlas is used to start conversations about health care differences, and the reasons why differences may be happening.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease is a group of diseases that affect your lungs and airways, causing breathing problems. For more information on COPD visit

<https://healthify.nz/health-a-z/c/copd/>

The COPD Atlas shows how many people in each district had COPD and how many were admitted to hospital as a result of their COPD in a year. The use of medication to manage COPD is also presented.

As COPD is a condition that develops as people age, only data for adults aged 45 years or over are included.

What the Atlas data shows

- In 2023, in New Zealand around 66,000 people aged 45 years or over were estimated to have COPD, with Māori having higher rates than other ethnic groups.
- Nearly 7,400 people were admitted to the hospital in 2023 due to COPD. Most admissions due to COPD were in people aged 75 and over or those of Māori and Pacific people ethnicity.
- About half of people with COPD regularly received triple therapy (three COPD medications), and just over half of those admitted to the hospital as a result of COPD received triple therapy in the year after their admission. This suggests that some people with severe COPD or who are hospitalised, could benefit from using triple therapy to better manage their condition. For more information on COPD medications, please see <https://www.asthmafoundation.org.nz/your-health/living-with-copd/copd-medications>
- We also found that a higher proportion of Pacific peoples and Māori aged 45 and over were being regularly dispensed reliever inhalers (blue inhaler, salbutamol) only. Reliever inhalers should only be used occasionally. Using them too often (more than

2 times a week) means that their condition is not well controlled. Tell your doctor if this is happening.

For more information on COPD management and whether you need to review your COPD medications visit: <https://www.asthmafoundation.org.nz/your-health/living-with-copd/manage-your-copd>

More information

Healthify has information about COPD including, causes, diagnosis, treatment and other resources: <https://healthify.nz/health-a-z/c/copd/>

The Asthma and Respiratory Foundation of New Zealand website also contains a lot of information and resources: <https://www.asthmafoundation.org.nz/your-health/living-with-copd>

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