Effects of a Pulmonary Rehabilitation Programme on Physiologic and Psychosocial Outcomes in Patients with Chronic Respiratory Disorders

K C Ong,* FAMS, MBBS, MRCP (UK), W P Wong,** BPT (Hons), A R Jailani,** B AppSc (PT), S Sew,** BPT, Y Y Ong,*** FAMS. M Med (Int Med), FRACP

Abstract

Introduction: The purpose of this prospective study is to determine the effects of a pulmonary rehabilitation programme (PRP) conducted at our centre for patients with chronic lung disease. Materials and Methods: Thirty-four patients (27 men and 7 women, mean age 67.6 years) with predominantly moderate-to-severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (31 patients), bronchiectasis (2 patients) and interstitial lung disease (1 patient) completed a 6-week outpatient PRP that included education, physical and respiratory care instruction and supervised exercise training. Outcome assessment was performed at baseline, on completion of PRP and 3 months after PRP. Physiologic measures included pulmonary function, incremental exercise and 6-minute walk tests (6MWTs). Disease-specific quality of life was assessed using the Chronic Respiratory Disease Questionnaire (CRDQ). Results: There was no significant change in resting spirometry or lung volumes after PRP. Maximal oxygen uptake and work-rate improved significantly after PRP by 132.4 mL kg\(^{-1}\) min\(^{-1}\) and 10.7 W, respectively. 6MWT distance improved significantly by a mean of 67.3 m (\(P < 0.0001\)). Maximum Borg dyspnoea scores decreased significantly by 1.2 ± 0.5 (\(P < 0.038\)). All domains of the CRDQ completed by a sub-group of patients improved significantly and the total scores increased by a mean of 21.7 points at the end of the PRP. The improvements gained in maximal exercise capacity immediately following PRP were maintained in 17 patients who returned for repeat assessment 3 months after PRP. Conclusion: Patients who completed a comprehensive PRP at our centre showed significant increase in functional capacity, reduction of exertional dyspnoea and improvement in health status.

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* Consultant
Department of Respiratory Medicine, Tan Tock Seng Hospital

*** Senior Consultant
Department of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine, Singapore General Hospital

** Physiotherapist
Physiotherapy Department, Singapore General Hospital

Address for Reprints: Dr Ong Kian Chung, Department of Respiratory Medicine, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, 11 Jalan Tan Tock Seng, Singapore 308433.