



**COPD Foundation
South Africa**



NewsLetter

December 2024

You are not alone

COPD Advocacy, Research,
Education and Support

Learn More...

Breathe Better



COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) Foundation Newsletter.

In this 1st issue following the launch of the COPD
Foundation on 20 November 2024,
you will find the following:

- [COPD in simple terms](#)
- [Launch of the COPD Foundation South Africa on the 2024 World COPD Day](#)
- The COPD Foundation's take home messages from topics covered by 2 speakers:
 - a. **Prof. Van Zyl Smit** – UCT, Groote Schuur
 - b. **Dr Kagiso Seripe** – Discovery Health
- [Launch Event Address by GAAPP CEO & President of Global Allergy & Airways Patient Platform, **Ms. Tonya Winders**: 'Speak Up for COPD'](#)
- [A sneak view of other World COPD Day Events](#)
- [Upcoming Event & Survey for your attention](#)



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COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) Foundation Newsletter

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is increasingly being identified as an important cause of morbidity, disability, and mortality worldwide¹. The variations in onset of the disease its progression and lung function trajectories at different life stages across populations make it difficult for us to understand the factors that put us at risk of developing COPD¹. Tobacco smoking and exposure to indoor air pollution (including pollution from biomass combustion), ambient air pollution, and occupational pollutants have, however, been reported as leading risk factors in most settings¹.

COPD affects 391 million people worldwide—that's equivalent to the population of 47 New York Cities, 44 Londons, 10 Tokyos, or 28 Rio De Janeiros. It is estimated that three million people die each year due to COPD, globally.^{2,3}

Lung function is not only a predictor of lung health, but a predictor of our overall health⁴.

Despite its massive devastation, COPD continues to be underprioritised, underfunded, and under-treated across healthcare systems globally^{2,3}.

What does Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) mean in simple terms⁵?

Chronic

This means that the disease lasts a long time and is always present. While the symptoms may take years to develop and the severity may differ at times, there is still much you can do to slow the progress of the disease.

Obstructive

The ability to move air in and out of your lungs is blocked or obstructed. This obstruction is caused by swelling and the presence of excessive mucus in the tubes of the lungs (airways) which carry air in and out.


Pulmonary

This means that the disease is located in and affects your lungs.

Disease

Your lungs have been damaged to some extent. At this stage, a cure for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease has not been found. The symptoms related to COPD can, however, be treated by a doctor.

Launch of the COPD Foundation South Africa



KNOW YOUR LUNG HEALTH
Launch of COPD Foundation on World COPD Day

Date: Wednesday, 20 November 2024
Time: 09h00 – 12h00
Location: Online
More info: Info@copd.co.za
Click on the link supplied to register


COPD Foundation
South Africa

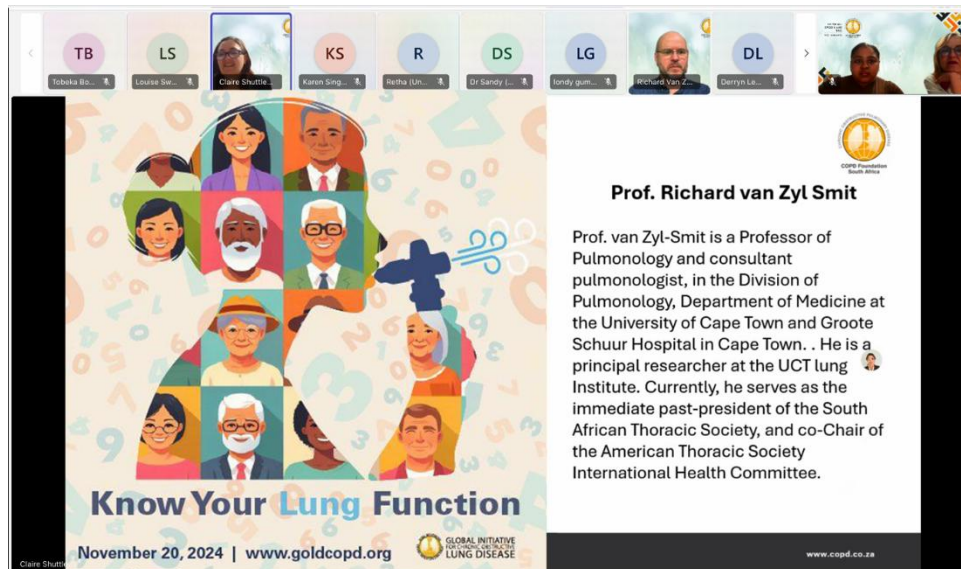

Know Your Lung Function

On 20 November 2024, the COPD Foundation of South Africa revived its existence through a launch that coincided with World COPD Day. We thank all who graced the launch occasion with their presence. In the first two newsletters (December 2024 and Q1 2025, we will be sharing with all attendees of the launch event, our take home messages from topics that were covered by some of our speakers. To receive future newsletters of the COPD Foundation thereafter, we kindly request that you visit our website www.copd.co.za to subscribe.

World COPD Day is commemorated globally on an annual basis to raise awareness about chronic obstructive pulmonary disease COPD. The COPD Foundation aims to empower patients, carers and healthcare providers of patients who live with COPD, to improve the quality of life and health outcomes for these patients.

The theme of World COPD Day in 2024 was ‘Know your lung function’. Measuring one’s lung function is an important step in diagnosing COPD. How well your lungs are functioning is measured by conducting a spirometry test, which is an important tool for not only diagnosing COPD, but also determines the extent of the disease. The test is simple and painless, and to obtain a more complete picture of how well your lungs are functioning, your doctor may request additional tests. Unfortunately, much of one’s lung function can be lost before one develops symptoms of COPD.

Lung function is not only a predictor of lung health but is also a predictor of our overall health. Knowing your lung function by conducting spirometry testing throughout your life increases the chances for early diagnosis and timely treatment of numerous lung diseases, including COPD.



On the launch agenda of 20 November 2024, was Professor Richard van Zyl Smit (Professor of Pulmonology and Consultant Pulmonologist, University of Cape Town and Groote Schuur Hospital), who shed some light on the evolution of our knowledge of COPD, from 1679 when Theophile Bonet referred to it as “voluminous lungs”, and 1769 with Giovanni Morgagni’s description of ‘turgid lungs”, to the following major milestones⁶:

- 1814: Charles Badham prompted the beginning of our clinical understanding of the ‘chronic bronchitis’ component of COPD, referring to the chronic cough and sputum production.
- 1821: Rene Laennec described the emphysema component of COPD.
- Two landmark meetings, the CIBA Guest Symposium in 1959 and the American Thoracic Society Committee on Diagnostic Standards in 1962 defined the emphysema and chronic bronchitis as components of COPD which are the foundation for our definitions today.

It was only in 1965 that the disease was being correctly referred to as COPD.

According to Prof van Zyl Smit and his co-authors in a 2010 paper titled ‘Global lung health – the colliding epidemics of TB, HIV, tobacco smoking and COPD’, it is now clear that in day-to-day clinical practice there is an emergence of a synergistic interaction between the epidemics of HIV, tobacco smoking and biomass fuel exposure, TB and COPD, in a large proportion of the world’s population.

These interactions deserve urgent attention and have major implications for co-ordinated public health planning and policy recommendations in the developing world like ours⁷. Healthcare practitioners locally are guided by the 2019 Thoracic Society Guidelines or Position Statement which pays particular attention to cost effectiveness in South Africa and promotes optimal care for COPD⁸. The guidelines promote a management plan, and a selection of treatment based on objective evidence of benefit to a patient. The guidelines recommend primary and secondary prevention including smoking cessation, early diagnosis, grading of severity, use of pharmacotherapy, pulmonary rehabilitation, and management of complications and co-morbidities.

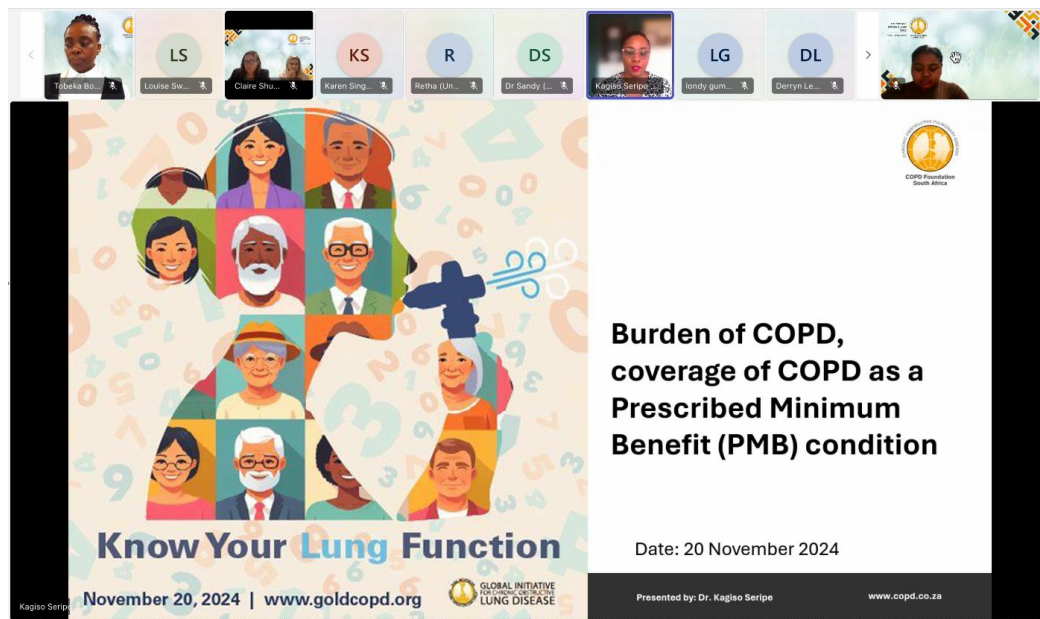
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Advice is provided on the management of acute exacerbations, prescription of long-term domiciliary oxygen, guidelines for air travel, indication for lung surgery and lung transplantation (LT), where required. The guidelines do, however, need to be updated. There is value in a collaborative approach by healthcare practitioners who manage COPD in both the home and healthcare settings. To better address COPD in South Africa, Prof. van Zyl Smit recommends the following:

- Better prevention Smoking cessation
- Access to diagnostic tools (lung function/spirometry test is pivotal to diagnosis)
- Access to a constant supply of appropriate medications at reasonable prices
- Pulmonary rehabilitation
- Teaching and education targeting doctors, students and patients
- Research and advocacy



The image shows a Zoom meeting interface with a presentation slide. The slide has a colorful background with a grid of diverse people's faces. The text on the slide reads: "Know Your Lung Function" in large blue letters, followed by "Burden of COPD, coverage of COPD as a Prescribed Minimum Benefit (PMB) condition" in bold black text. Below this, it says "Date: 20 November 2024". At the bottom, it states "Presented by: Dr. Kagiso Seripe" and "www.copd.co.za". The Zoom meeting controls at the top show several participants with initials like LS, KS, R, DS, LG, and DL.

Dr. Kagiso Seripe, Head of Clinical Benefit Advisory, at Discovery Health highlighted how the local burden of COPD aligns with global trends. This is in keeping with the Council for Medical Schemes Report of 2023/2024 which states the following: “The CMS conducted a comprehensive study between 2014 and 2022 to assess the prevalence of chronic conditions among medical scheme beneficiaries. The study found that chronic respiratory ailments in South Africa, notably asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), stand out as significant health burdens that align with global trends⁹.”

The WHO’s global burden of disease data estimates that in 2019, just over 212 million adults were living with COPD. According to WHO more than 90% of COPD deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). It has been projected that by 2030 non-communicable diseases (NCDs) will be the most common causes of mortality in LMICs due to a combination of increasing and aging populations¹⁰.

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COPD is a disease that is listed as having Prescribed Minimum Benefits (PMBs) status. PMBs are a set of defined benefits to ensure that all medical scheme members have access to certain minimum health services, regardless of the benefit option they have selected¹¹. The aim is to provide people with continuous care to improve their health and well-being and to make healthcare more affordable. The following prescribed minimum benefits should be covered as a minimum for patients living with COPD, who are medical scheme members:

- Diagnostic tests
- Monitoring investigations
- Consultations
- Medical therapy
- Oxygen therapy
- Treatment of acute exacerbations

Dr. Seripe further advised the COPD Foundation to widely disseminate information to raise awareness about COPD and promote targeted screening in areas deemed to have a high prevalence of COPD. This would go a long way in promoting early diagnosis and timely management of COPD, thereby reducing the high costs associated with patients who present late with the disease already advanced.

Ms. Tonya Winders is the President & CEO of GAAPP, the Global Allergy & Airways Patient Platform, an umbrella organization of +/- 150 patient advocacy organizations in respiratory & immunology. The COPD Foundation of South Africa recently became a member of GAAPP. COPD is the third largest cause of death globally, but it is often under-prioritised, underfunded and undertreated^{2,3}.

[Please click on this link](#) to listen to Ms. Tonya Winders talking on 'Speak Up for COPD', a campaign that is intended to raise awareness and understanding of COPD amongst policymakers and healthcare decision makers by amplifying the voices of patients, the COPD community and the public. Our one critical goal is to establish COPD as a public health priority.

A summary of other topics delivered at the launch event of 20 November 2024, including the patient testimonial, will be included in our Q1 COPD Foundation Newsletter – WATCH THIS SPACE!

Highlighting some global Events on World COPD Day

Advocating for Change: Highlights from #WorldCOPDDay and COPD Awareness Initiatives¹²

This year's #WorldCOPDDay marked significant strides in COPD advocacy and awareness:

- Capitol Hill Advocacy: GAAPP joined forces with COPD action, COPD Foundation, and Right2Breathe for a lunch briefing titled "Fighting for Air: Reducing the Burden of COPD through Policy." Key discussions focused on policy changes to address the significant impact of COPD.
- Speak Up for COPD Campaign: GAAPP calls for greater awareness and better care for those living with COPD. Join us in the movement to empower patients, advocate for change, and act to improve care. Lend your voice, help us achieve 10.000 voices and #SpeakUpforCOPD! Visit speakupforcopd.com to learn how you can make a difference in advancing the future of COPD care.
- #COPDBatonPass: GAAPP's CEO and VP of Education joined this global 24-hour virtual event, highlighting initiatives like Speak Up for COPD and educational efforts to promote COPD awareness.
- Additionally, GAAPP participated in the 9th annual GOLD International COPD Conference in Philadelphia, representing global advances in COPD advocacy for the #SpeakUpForCOPD coalition.

Future COPD Foundation Event Scheduled for Q1: Tips for Daily Living for Patients diagnosed with COPD

To help the COPD Foundation in choosing the most suitable date for our next event in January 2025, we invite you to take part in a quick survey on our website. Please visit our website www.copd.co.za or go directly to the [survey](#) and share your valuable input. Your feedback will help us select a date that works best for everyone, ensuring that we can include as many of you as possible in this important event, where we hope to empower patients living with COPD, with tips that may improve their day to day living.

References:

¹Adeloye D, Song P, Zhu Y, et al. Global, regional, and national prevalence of, and risk factors for, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in 2019: a systematic review and modelling analysis. *Lancet Respir Med.* (2022) Vol 10(5); 447-458 [REF-162199]

²The Lancet. Global burden of 288 causes of death and life expectancy decomposition in 204 countries and territories and 811 subnational locations, 1990–2021: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2021

³Quaderi, S. A., & Hurst, J. R. (2018). The unmet global burden of COPD. *Global health, epidemiology and genomics*, 3, e4.

⁴ [World COPD Day 2024 - Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease - GOLD \(goldcopd.org\)](https://goldcopd.org)

⁵ [How is COPD Diagnosed? | COPD Foundation](#)

⁶ [The International Journal of COPD, 2006: The History of COPD](#)

⁷ Richard N. van Zyl-Smit, Laurence Brunet, Madhukar Pai, Wing-Wai Yew, The Convergence of the Global Smoking, COPD, Tuberculosis, HIV, and Respiratory Infection Epidemics, *Infectious Disease Clinics of North America*, Volume 24, Issue 3, 2010, Pages 693-703

⁸ Abdool-Gaffar MS, Calligaro G, Wong ML, Smith C, Lalloo UG, Koegelenberg CFN, Dheda K, Allwood BW, Goolam-Mahomed A, van Zyl-Smit RN. Management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease-A position statement of the South African Thoracic Society: 2019 update. *J Thorac Dis.* 2019 Nov;11(11):4408-4427.

⁹ [CMS Annual Report 2023/24 | Council for Medical Schemes](#)

¹⁰Int J Chron Obstruct Pulmon Dis. 2023 Aug 2;18:1665–1679. doi: 10.2147/COPD.S39583

¹¹ [PMB Conditions | Council for Medical Schemes](#)

¹² [Newsletter: November 2024 - Global Allergy & Airways Patient Platform](#)