

# A practical approach to vocational pulmonary rehabilitation

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## Introduction

It is well documented that it is difficult for people with chronic illness to maintain a working relationship. As part of a project to establish Glittrelinikken as a national centre of clinical excellence in vocational lung rehabilitation – a new model was developed.

## Aims

To offer a vocational lung rehabilitation program at our clinic based on “best practice” and to explore to what degree we can assist patients to stay employed.

## Methods

The model consists of a 4 week inpatient rehabilitation program for patients with COPD/asthma. The objective is getting to work or staying at work. Inclusion criterias are: chronic lung disease, age <60, in a working relationship and motivation for work.

The program includes medical and vocational assessment, cardiopulmonary exercise testing, multidisciplinary patient education, exercise, individual and group counselling. Questionnaires that have been used are SGRQ, General Perceived Self Efficacy scale and Subjective health problems last 30 days (SHC). Follow-up by phone after 1, 6 and 12 months, questionnaires at 6 and 12 months. They also completed a semi structured questionnaire regarding their stay at the clinic.

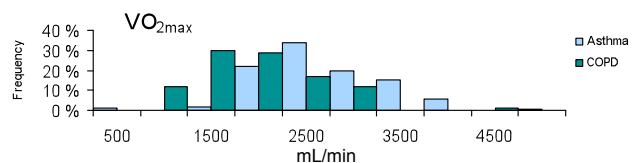
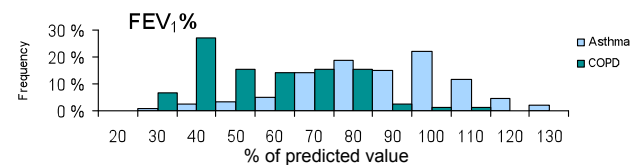
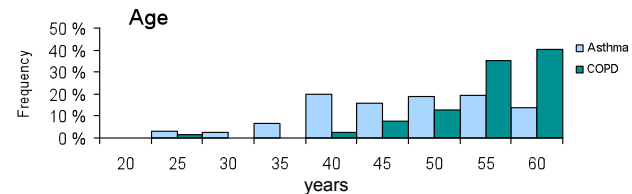
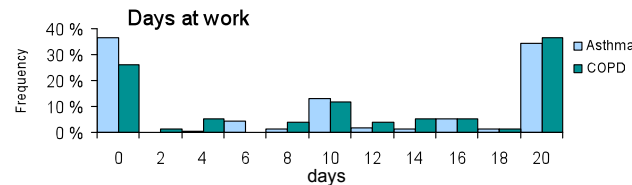


## Patient characteristics

Gender		At work*
Male	45 %	42 %
Female	55 %	58 %
<b>Diagnosis</b>		
Asthma	56 %	52 %
COPD	33 %	34 %
Other	11 %	11 %

\*Present at work 10 days or more the previous month

## Frequency distributions



## Results

Our patient evaluation questionnaires shows that 94% were satisfied with the goal they set for their rehabilitation. 68% say they have reached their goals and 27% have reached it to some degree. 53% feel more ready to get back to/continue work and 33% are to some degree. 66% feel they master their disease a lot better and 28% master it better.

For asthmatics, there was an association between SGRQ, VO2 peak and SHC prior to rehabilitation and the work status 6 months after rehabilitation. There was no such association in the COPD patients

## Conclusion

- Our results suggest that participation in a vocational lungrehabilitation program can help patients regain belief in themselves and the fact that they can stay at work in spite of their chronic illness.
- SGQR, VO2peak and SHC may be a prognostic factor for continued work participation in asthmatics. These are preliminary numbers and further research in this field is needed.

## References

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