Improving diagnosis of asthma-COPD overlap

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A University of Texas at Arlington faculty member and nurse practitioner (NP) said she hopes to bring more attention to an underrecognized condition.

Lynda Jarrell, clinical assistant professor at the College of Nursing and Health Innovation (CONHI), is author of "Asthma-COPD Overlap: The NP's Role in Diagnosis and Management," published in the February 2022 volume of the journal *The Nurse Practitioner*.

In it, Jarrell discusses how patients may not have just asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), but rather clinical symptoms reflective of both, known as asthma-COPD overlap (ACO). A different treatment plan is necessary to consider the full extent of the overlap, and not recognizing it could lead to increased mortality.

"Asthma-COPD overlap patients have worse outcomes than patients with either disease alone," she said. "Correct diagnosis is extremely important."

Jarrell hopes her article contributes to a clear definition of ACO, specific diagnostic treatment and evidence-based guidelines for treatment. She also hopes to spark more writing on ACO, particularly in nursing journals, to increase nurse practitioner knowledge and improve patient outcomes.

"It's important that nurse practitioners know and understand ACO because they may be the first person to see this patient and to diagnose them," she said.

  More information: Lynda Jarrell, Asthma-COPD overlap, *The Nurse Practitioner* (2022). DOI: 10.1097/01.NPR.0000806392.71827.cc

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