

8.25 Voices from the Frontline: Harnessing Focus Groups to Shape COPD Virtual Care Ward Innovations

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Background: The integration of digital health technology in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) management presents a unique opportunity to enhance patient care. Focus groups involving COPD patients are instrumental in shaping new services that resonate with the patients' needs and preferences. Engaging directly with patients allows for a deeper understanding of their experiences, challenges, and expectations regarding digital health solutions. As one participant remarked, *"The technology I'd manage but being able to be in my garden in the sunshine would be amazing"*. By fostering an open dialogue, focus groups create a platform for patients to express their concerns and wishes. This collaborative approach ensures that new services are not only clinically effective but also user-friendly and relevant. Another participant in the group commented, *"all about your condition is spoken out loud for everyone to hear"* following a recent Accident and Emergency presentation, *"to share our stories, helps you see these problems for us"* which in turn allows practical solutions. **Results:** Moreover, focus groups can identify gaps in existing services and highlight features that matter most to patients. For instance, feedback on usability can lead to the design of more intuitive interfaces, enhancing patient adherence and engagement. In a recent mHealth App Usability Questionnaire, a respondent scored 7/10 for *"The information in the app was well organized, so I could easily find the information I needed."* **Conclusion:** Ultimately, incorporating patient voices through focus groups fosters a patient-centered approach in developing digital health technologies for COPD management. This not only improves the design and implementation of services but also empowers patients, making them active participants in their health journey. By prioritising their insights, healthcare providers can ensure that new services effectively address the unique challenges faced by COPD patients, leading to improved, cost effective outcomes, hospital avoidance and a better quality of life. **Conflict of Interest-** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.