



# The Italian BREATHs Project - Building Research and Alliances for Respiratory Tract in Healthcare systems

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## BACKGROUND

Respiratory diseases are one of the major public health problems, ranked fifth in 2020 as a worldwide burden of disease according to a recent report published by the World Bank/World Health Organization.

As in most of developed countries, in Italy respiratory problems are associated with considerable mortality (COPD is the third leading cause of death with a 6,8% on total mortality rate) and with a significant burden affecting the healthcare system and society.

Yet, respiratory medicine, because of bureaucracy and absence of dynamism, has failed in attracting the due attention both from the healthcare community and government officials in terms of resources allocation and in playing the right role for pneumologists as promoter of a sustainable respiratory medicine/network within the Italian healthcare system.

## METHODS

According to the Respiratory Roadmap of the European Respiratory Society (ERS), pneumologists need to develop new skills in order to increase and promote a transformation of respiratory medicine in Italy, capable of helping the thousands of people affected by this group of diseases.

With these concerns in mind, a committed group of clinical leaders (including representatives of the respiratory Italian medical associations), healthcare managers and pharma, supported by a team of public health researchers, have launched the Building REsearch and Alliances for Respiratory Tract in Healthcare systems (BREATHs) project.

Three working groups have been organized on the following workstreams, involving a panel of 13 experts: 1) the role and competencies of pneumologists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; 2) the healthcare governance and sustainability and 3) the governance of chronic (respiratory) diseases.

The so called "BREATHs Lab" was used to let professionals work together, starting from evidence-based structured frameworks and producing solutions to be directly implemented into the respiratory community by clinicians and policy makers.



## RESULTS

Multidisciplinary team working has led the BREATHs project to create a Consensus Report focused on how to improve Italian pneumologists' competencies and the functioning of the respiratory system in terms of 1) clinical management and leadership skills; 2) resources management and 3) care delivery reorganization based on a systems, networks and pathways approach.

The existing evidence-based documents (i. e. European Core Curriculum for Pneumologist) as well as international and national best practices (i.e. Regional model of chronic care



governance such as Lombardy CREGs) have been collected and critically analysed in order to develop innovative solutions on each topic.

A final results dissemination will take place through workshops and regional training initiatives for clinicians.

## CONCLUSION

Healthcare planning, under such a strong financial pressure, have to be oriented to the creation of a value framework where learning and improvement are core to the system's culture and where professionals and policy makers have obligation to do their best to make health care coverage sustainable.

The BREATHs project has been the first initiative in Italy focused on improving of health professionals' expertise with a multidisciplinary approach.

This initiative will bring Italian pneumologists to develop new skills in order to play an active role in the transformation of Italian healthcare system, as requested by the financial crisis and the national healthcare system sustainability.

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