Improving Early Detection of Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency: Understanding Barriers and Facilitators to Testing

Record number : OPR-1470

Overview

RESEARCH DIRECTION

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ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT(S)

Faculté de médecine et des sciences de la santé
Département de médecine
École de réadaptation

LEVEL(S)

2e cycle

LOCATION(S)

Campus de la santé
Campus de Longueuil
Centre de recherche du CRCHUS
À distance/Télétravail

Project Description

Project DescriptionAlpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency (AATD) is an inherited condition that increases the risk of developing chronic respiratory diseases, particularly chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Despite recommendations for targeted testing, AATD remains substantially underdiagnosed, and many individuals experience delays in receiving a diagnosis. Improving early detection is therefore an important priority for patients and healthcare professionals.Healthcare professionals play an important role in identifying individuals who may benefit from testing. Respiratory therapists, in particular, are well positioned to contribute to early detection through their involvement in pulmonary function testing, respiratory assessment, and the management of chronic respiratory conditions. However, little is known about their current practices, perceived roles and responsibilities, or the factors influencing their involvement in AATD testing.This research project aims to understand the barriers and facilitators influencing the early detection of AATD, focusing on respiratory therapists' identification of patients eligible for testing and their involvement in facilitating testing.The proposed study will use a qualitative approach involving semi-structured interviews with respiratory therapists across Canada. Drawing on implementation science, including the Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF), the study will examine behavioural, professional, organizational, and contextual factors that influence testing practices.Findings will help identify opportunities to strengthen early detection practices and inform the development of future strategies to improve access to appropriate testing.Student InvolvementA funded master's research position is available as part of this project.The student will take an active role in conducting the research, including:-Reviewing and synthesizing relevant scientific literature.-Developing the research protocol and preparing the research ethics application, with guidance from the supervisory team.-Developing the interview guide informed by the TDF.-Recruiting participants and conducting qualitative interviews.-Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data.-Preparing research outputs, including scientific publications and conference presentations.The student will receive mentorship and training in qualitative research methods and implementation science.Desired Profile-Bachelor's degree in health sciences or a related discipline (e.g., nursing, rehabilitation sciences, public health, psychology, or other relevant fields).-Strong academic record.-Interest in healthcare practices, respiratory health, and implementation science.-Interest in qualitative research methods, including interviews and qualitative data analysis.-Strong organizational skills, attention to detail, and ability to work independently.-Excellent

interpersonal and communication skills, including an interest in engaging with healthcare professionals and collaborating with research teams.-Excellent command of written and spoken English and French (required).-Previous research experience or familiarity with qualitative analysis software (e.g., NVivo) is an asset but not required.-Candidates must meet the admission requirements of the Master's in Health Sciences Research program at the Université de Sherbrooke.Funding Offered: A funded master's position is available. Funding details will be discussed with interested candidates.Submit your applicationApplicants must send the required documents to Pr. Zaccagnini by email at marco.zaccagnini@usherbrooke.ca Please provide:√ Curriculum vitæ√ Most recent transcripts√ Cover letter√ Reference letter (optional for application, but mandatory after interview)

Funding offered

Yes

The last update was on 11 November 2026. The University reserves the right to modify its projects without notice.