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Modern Researchers in the Management of Chronic Lung Diseases

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Abstract

Chronic lung diseases (CLD) continue to be a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide. The task force on CLD provides a consensus statement accompanied by high-quality reviews summarising the current state of CLD research and highlighting future directions. Despite wide geographic variations in risk factor exposure and disease prevalence, the complex and interconnected interplay of key factors is considered in low- and middle-income countries (Sandra Gould et al., 2023). In high-income countries, progress has been made in understanding and addressing some research priorities, but major inequities remain in vulnerable populations. Ongoing new threats have emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaboration between researchers, governments, and policy-makers is essential to mitigate the impact of current and future challenges on lung health.

For researchers in academia and elsewhere, the past few years have been defined by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has brought new challenges, but also opportunities, to address chronic and newly emerging threats to lung health. A consensus statement focussing on chronic lung diseases is presented, along with accompanying reviews highlighting key research priorities. Chronic lung diseases (CLD) impose a substantial health burden worldwide, with millions of deaths every year. Policymakers in many countries prioritise cardiovascular disease, but an agenda to tackle the increasing burden of lung diseases is lacking (Ambrosino et al., 2015).

Keywords-Chronic bronchitis, emphysema, pulmonary rehabilitation, telemedicine, smart sensors, precision medicine, artificial intelligence, fixed dose combination nanoparticles, drug repurposing

Chronic lung diseases (CLD) remain a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, accounting for 8 million deaths globally in 2019 and 3 million deaths due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) alone. While significant achievements have been made in research and care, CLD still disproportionately affects low-and-middle-income countries due to inadequate healthcare infrastructure, poverty, and environmental impacts. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, this paper outlines the current state of chronic lung disease research,

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focusing on modern disease understanding, management, and intervention strategies, as well as the roles of clinicians, researchers, and policymakers.

The keywords listed encapsulate the essential terms relevant to this paper. They are a guide for readers and researchers on chronic lung diseases, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, pulmonary rehabilitation, telemedicine, smart sensors, precision medicine, artificial intelligence, fixed dose combination nanoparticles, drug repurposing, and the topics discussed in the paper. Keywords are important for enhancing research visibility and accessibility. They make a paper easily searchable in academic databases and direct traffic to the research. Ideally, the selected keywords should reflect the paper's core topics and themes, and the keywords listed above were carefully chosen to meet this goal.

The keywords chronic lung diseases, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema reflect the subject focus of the paper. The other keywords represent the key components of modern understanding, management, and intervention strategies of chronic lung diseases. Telemedicine, smart sensors, precision medicine, and artificial intelligence are contemporary trends in healthcare, which modern researchers must focus on for better disease understanding and outcome. Fixed dose combination nanoparticles and drug repurposing highlight the emerging technologies and strategies in drug discovery and development, the focus of researchers for the efficient management of chronic lung diseases. These keywords will serve as a point of reference for the most impactful and relevant topics discussed in-depth later in the document (Meena et al., 2014), (Sandra Gould et al., 2023).

1. Introduction to Chronic Lung Diseases

Chronic lung diseases rank among the highest threats to human health. Understanding chronic lung diseases is imperative as they are estimated to inflict 1 in 7 deaths worldwide, with the highest prevalence attributed to low- and middle-income countries (Sandra Gould et al., 2023). Chronic lung diseases greatly affect the quality of life and increasing susceptibility during the current pandemic times of COVID-19 can further aggravate the disease conditions. Chronic lung disease not only threatens life but also has huge societal cost implications. It is imperative to devise a comprehensive plan for the management of chronic lung diseases to minimize economic and societal burdens. This deliberation highlights the contemporary understanding of chronic lung diseases and suggests future management strategies that need to be considered. Chronic lung diseases are defined by the presence of breathlessness and cough with sputum production for ≥3 months in two consecutive years. The basic understanding of chronic lung disease involves the concept of pathophysiology beginning with the insult. Chronic lung diseases usually have an external etiology leading to exaggerated inflammatory response within lungs. Common etiologies leading to chronic lung diseases include exposure to cigarette smoke, air pollution, and other industrial particulates. Despite significant differences in the

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types of diseases, degree of insult, age at which insult occurs, and genetic susceptibility, the chronic pathophysiological changes across chronic lung diseases involve a cell cycle aberration of the repair and remodeling orchestrating cells such that the predominant secretory cell populations exaggerate proteolytic and fibrotic imbalance. Regulatory challenge – treatment efficacy vs. disease progression – chronic lung diseases cannot be cured. Eventually, drug-free controls lead to the patient's demise. Therefore, newly diagnosed patients are treated free of charge with the intent to change the course of action. Challenging the above paradigm, newly diagnosed patients should undergo bronchoscopy examination and biobanking along with 3-month treatment with the most effective drug combination followed by disease-relevant drug-free periods. Chronic lung diseases have many conflicting features making overall understanding challenging. Chronic lung diseases begin to progress before diagnosis is done. Therefore, it is important to develop simple disease-relevant biomarkers for the consideration of general population screening.

1.1. Definition and Types of Chronic Lung Diseases

Chronic respiratory diseases are an important cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, but outside of the major public health organisations they have received little attention as a group (Sandra Gould et al., 2023). Chronic respiratory diseases are disorders of the airways and other structures of the lung, and include chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), lung cancer, asthma, bronchiectasis, interstitial lung diseases, occupational lung diseases and pulmonary hypertension. There is a high burden of chronic lung disease in low and middle income countries, particularly among the poor and disadvantaged. Despite the availability of cost-effective interventions, health system inadequacies result in neglected, underdiagnosed and poorly managed diseases. Due to the complex interactions of lung diseases with environmental factors and multimorbidity, a systems approach is necessary for maximum impact. Each individual chronic lung pathology will require precise remedial approaches, but the common clinical manifestations of cough, wheeze, breathlessness and fatigue provide opportunities for integrated assessment. For each disease, improved epidemiology, mechanisms, diagnostic approaches and management are key. Consideration is also needed of non-lung consequences of disease and lung manifestations of systemic disease.

Chronic lung pathologies that require repair and regeneration include chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, lung fibrosis and bronchiectasis (de Hilster et al., 2019). Patients with COPD, asthma and bronchiectasis share similar symptoms, such as wheeze, cough, and shortness of breath, resulting from airflow limitation and other abnormalities in airflow, gas exchange, or lung compliance. Nevertheless, these three diseases are distinct syndromes with different underlying mechanisms and thus require different management. In COPD, chronic airway inflammation and/or parenchymal destruction by protease-antiprotease imbalance lead to permanent narrowing of small airways and local airflow limitation. Airway

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and parenchymal changes tend to progress unabated even during non-exacerbation periods. In asthma, chronic airway inflammation induces airway hyperresponsiveness resulting in paroxysmal bronchoconstriction. Unlike COPD, changes in airway structure in asthma are generally fully or partially reversible following treatment. In bronchiectasis, a history of significant airway injury leads to permanent distortion of the airway wall and localised airflow limitation. Unlike COPD, patients with bronchiectasis can have normal lung function between exacerbations.

1.2. Epidemiology and Global Burden

Chronic lung diseases, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma, represent a significant global health burden. COPD is projected to become the third leading cause of mortality worldwide by 2030. In 2019, an estimated 424 million individuals were affected by COPD, representing a 44% rise since 1990. Chronic lung diseases account for over five million premature deaths annually, with the highest burden in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). This burden disproportionally affects women due to rising smoking rates and exposure to household air pollution, often from cooking stoves. Despite this, chronic lung disease epidemiology is the most neglected of the world's top 10 deadly diseases. Over 80% of countries lack a chronic respiratory disease epidemiological study, with LMICs particularly underserved. Most population-based studies are over a decade old and restricted to select regions and countries. As a result, changes in disease prevalence cannot be tracked, complicating effective public health responses .

Chronic lung diseases are largely preventable and treatable, yet risk factors and disease development are poorly understood. Prevalence rates, classified by population demographics, geography, and high morbidity/symptom rates, are detailed. Smoking, indoor/outdoor pollution, occupational hazards, and genetics are all known risk factors. Despite having a similar risk factor profile, significantly different disease prevalence rates are seen across regions. Health disparities are observed among subpopulations, with women disproportionately affected in developed countries and children/poor populations severely impacted in LMICs. Comorbidities worsen disease progression and management, but their role is poorly understood. Epidemiological data gaps fuel stigma and neglect, and chronic lung diseases are often overlooked in national agendas despite a mounting burden. Such concerns compel continued research and effective management practices. For clarity, data on the global burden of chronic lung diseases are globally presented.

2. Pathophysiology of Chronic Lung Diseases

Chronic lung diseases (CLDs), including asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and cystic fibrosis (CF), represent one of the largest disease burdens on the global population and economy (Haydn Walters et al., 2021). Significant scientific and clinical

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research efforts have sought to mitigate the impacts of these complex diseases, with varying success. In order to move knowledge and understanding forward and better address the gaps that remain, novel concepts and insights need to be considered now and in the coming future. Applying learnings and experiences from disease management and research outside the lungs will help consider new avenues and ways forward in lung disease management and research. CLDs are complex, multifactorial disease entities that manifest through cumulative effects and interactions of different dimensions, including pathophysiological, clinical, epidemiological, demographic, geometrical, anatomical, cellular and molecular. Pathophysiological insights and mechanisms balance a knowledge foundation necessary to understand and systemically address how, why, and where a disease manifests and progresses. In parallel, considering the interplay of multiple dimensions helps understand disease emergence, preventability, progress, and treatment options. Focusing only on pathophysiology risks oversimplifying the complexity of diseases; however, pathophysiological mechanisms are by essence the most rational therapeutic targets. Thus, primarily tackling the pathophysiological dimension of a disease helps design interventions that will directly impact the disease itself, rather than impacts on other dimensions or disease co-factors.

2.1. Inflammation and Airway Remodeling

Chronic lung diseases (CLDs), which include chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), chronic asthma, and cystic fibrosis (CF), impose a significant socio-economic burden worldwide. CLDs are usually characterized by chronic inflammation of the airways, persistent airway obstruction, and airway remodeling. Exacerbations of CLDs result in a sudden worsening of symptoms and progression of the diseases. Airway remodeling and inflammation are regarded as the key pathophysiological processes that significantly affect disease progression and development of exacerbations in CLDs (Singh Dhanjal et al., 2022).

Focusing specifically on inflammation and airway remodeling in the context of chronic lung diseases (CLDs), both processes play pivotal roles in the pathogenesis of these diseases. Inflammation is characterized by an aberrant immune response either to exogenous insults or to endogenous factors. Dysregulated inflammation causes an uncontrolled and persistent inflammatory response in the airways. This leads to progressive tissue damage and alteration of lung architecture, including the thickening of airway walls and formation of scar tissues. Collectively, these pathological changes are defined as airway remodeling. A wide variety of key immune pathways and inflammatory mediators involved in the modulation of inflammation and airway remodeling have been identified, which enhances the understanding of how these processes are targeted in the current or developing treatment strategies for CLDs.

Airway remodeling is further defined as a long-term physiological change that leads to permanent structural alterations of the airways. The pathophysiological consequences of

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remodeling in CLDs significantly impair respiratory function by inducing fixed airway obstruction and resistance to bronchodilation. Recent advances in the understanding of remodeling in CLDs provide new insights into the possibility of reversing or inhibiting remodeling by new or repurposed treatments. Collectively, remodeling is regarded as a multicellular process involving structural cells, immune cells, and the extracellular matrix. In CLDs, remodeling is associated with aberrant activation of developmental processes implicated in misresting cellular plasticity or reprogramming pathways, including epithelial–mesenchymal transition, mucous metaplasia, endothelial–mesenchymal transition, and changes in fibroblast phenotypes. Thus, new therapeutic approaches focus on tuning or resetting the mode of actions of the key players involved in the developmental processes that drive remodeling.

Inflammation is the source of exacerbations in chronic lung diseases (CLDs). The pivotal role of inflammation in the pathogenesis of chronic lung diseases (CLDs), including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), chronic asthma, and cystic fibrosis (CF), has been well established. CLDs are usually characterized by chronic inflammation of the airways. In the exacerbations of CLDs, a sudden worsening of symptoms occurs, usually caused by an inflammatory response to either infectious or non-infectious insults.

2.2. Role of Genetics and Environmental Factors

A combination of genetics and environmental factors (also referred to as “gene-environment” factors or influences) determines if and how a chronic lung disease develops and progresses. Currently researched genetic predispositions may heighten an individual’s risk of developing a chronic lung disease. However, these diseases are not fully hereditary or genetic. Having a relative with a chronic lung disease only somewhat increases another relative’s risk of developing one, as other environmental exposures also play an imminent role in the disease’s onset. The development of chronic lung diseases is thus concomitantly determined by genetics and environmental factors (D.J. Ubags et al., 2020). Factors individually shape how one experiences these diseases, and understanding such factors is essential for personalizing healthcare approaches. Understanding and recognizing these influences are also fundamental for preventative measures and for understanding why individuals of similar exposures experience chronic lung diseases differently. Both susceptibility and resistance to chronic lung diseases can be influenced by genetics, environmental factors, or a combination of both, as can the severity of a disease once contracted. In addition to shaping one’s chance of acquiring a disease, genetic and environmental factors have been shown to interact with and influence the treatment outcomes and effectiveness of prescribed medicines for chronic lung diseases (H. Czarnecka-Chrebelska et al., 2023). Chronic lung diseases are thus multifactorial in their origin and development. A thorough overview of how and which factors play a role in the onset or development of chronic lung diseases is provided—with an emphasis on the currently

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researched disease-related genetic factors, known environmental factors, and the important interactions between the two. The awareness of simple environmental or genetic risk factors affecting whole populations needs to be shifted toward complex gene-environment interactions that play unique roles in each individual. Understanding this complexity is key in fundamentally shifting how chronic lung diseases are treated and managed and in developing effective preventative strategies.

3. Diagnosis and Assessment of Chronic Lung Diseases

Accurate diagnosis and assessment are necessary to effectively manage chronic lung diseases. These conditions may present variably, both clinically and through tests. Awareness of common presentations and likely symptoms enables healthcare professionals to identify them as possible conditions and refer for investigation. So, a careful evaluation can differentiate the overlapping symptoms of several chronic lung diseases. The existence of standardized diagnostic criteria and clinical guidelines is vital in ensuring consistency and accuracy in the diagnosis of chronic lung diseases throughout healthcare systems (Sandra Gould et al., 2023). In conjunction with diagnosis, the assessment of lung diseases is necessary for their evaluation and monitoring; various techniques can be utilized for the assessment of lung diseases.

Assessment generally involves a combination of approaches, including clinical assessment, symptom evaluation, physiological assessment, and imaging techniques. Clinical assessment often summarizes the results of asking a patient about their condition and the healthcare professional's observations. Various imaging techniques can be integrated into the assessment process; in the context of chronic lung diseases, they are beneficial for the visualization of the condition of the lungs. A clear understanding of the commonly adopted diagnostic pathways for lung disease ensures their early identification and preventative measures, and an understanding of the assessment techniques assists in the interpretation and implementation of assessment procedures (Badnjevic et al., 2018). Although these diseases are chronic, there is a necessity for ongoing assessment in chronic cases, as the development of novel assessment techniques may impact patient management. Ongoing assessment is often recommended in the case of chronic diseases to understand the disease state better, evaluate the efficacy of treatment or intervention, and determine any necessary adjustments to the management of the disease.

3.1. Clinical Presentation and Symptoms

In general, a chronic disease is defined as one lasting three months or more, and chronic diseases of the lungs affect millions of people each year; COPD alone affected an estimated 384 million people in 2010. Chronic lung diseases (CLD), of which Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), asthma, and bronchiectasis are the most prevalent, are characterized by a progressive narrowing of the airways leading to an inexorable decline in lung function. During disease progression or exacerbation, airway narrows abnormally leading

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to increased resistance to airflow and impairment in gas exchange, causing symptoms such as chronic cough, wheezing, shortness of breath (dyspnea), and sputum production (van der Molen et al., 2013). These symptoms vary widely in both their presentation and severity across patients and across diseases. The onset and development of symptoms are influenced by individual patient characteristics as well as the stage of disease; for example, cough, wheezing, and sputum production are hallmarks of disease in some patients (as in asthma and bronchiectasis), whereas these symptoms generally go unnoticed in the majority of COPD patients until late-stage disease. Awareness of the symptoms most characteristic to each patient's condition is vital for developing treatment plans tailored to the individual and monitoring the continued efficacy of treatment.

Chronic lung diseases impact over 500,000 people in the United Kingdom alone. Symptoms often go unreported to healthcare providers due to a general misunderstanding of how these diseases are manifested. Therefore, improving patient understanding of what symptoms to be aware of and how to manage them is imperative if care plans are to be effective. Education programs developed in conjunction with healthcare providers should encourage patients to observe and record the evolution of their symptoms, as well as their perception of the efficacy of treatment plans. This will facilitate communication between patient and provider, leading to a clearer understanding of the necessary adjustments to care plans. Importantly, patients should be made aware that symptoms may take time to resolve following adjustment of treatment and that symptom management sometimes requires several different approaches used in combination.

3.2. Imaging Techniques

Chronic lung diseases (CLD) account for a significant number of deaths worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) a priority disease. Researchers are focused on early diagnosis and effective management of chronic lung diseases. Management of the lung disease requires accurate detection and staging of the disease. Clinical examination and history may not always be sufficient to have a precise understanding of the lung pathology. Therefore, additional tools are required to visualize the lung pathology. Imaging techniques play a significant role in the diagnosis and assessment of lung diseases (Musch, 2019). There exists a wide range of imaging techniques that have been applied for the chronic lung disease either in research or clinical practice. A thorough understanding of the currently used imaging techniques for the assessment of chronic lung disease is crucial for the modern researchers in this field.

Imaging techniques provide a visual representation of some aspect of pathology. Imaging techniques generally complement the clinical evaluation in providing a more accurate diagnosis. The most commonly used imaging technique for the chest is the plain chest X-ray.

Power System Technology
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The X-ray is primarily used as a screening tool to detect gross abnormalities in the lung. The presence of any abnormality detected in the X-ray is generally followed by a more sophisticated imaging modality, computed tomography (CT) scan. CT is a cross-sectional imaging technique where a series of two-dimensional (2D) X-ray projections are acquired at different angles around the object being imaged. The projections are processed using a mathematical algorithm to form a three-dimensional (3D) image of the cross-section. High-Resolution CT (HRCT) is a specialized form of CT scan that uses thin collimation and high reconstruction algorithms to generate a series of images having less than or equal to 1mm slice thickness in order to better visualize the lung parenchyma (D Weatherley et al., 2019). CT scans are helpful in detecting and characterizing various lung abnormalities that may not be visible in a plain X-ray. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) uses the change in the nuclear magnetic resonance of the atoms present in the tissue to generate the image. Both CT scan and MRI are frequently used in the assessment of chronic lung diseases. Each imaging modality has its own advantages in revealing certain features of the chronic lung disease. Integration of imaging results with clinical symptoms and examination findings is crucial to arrive at an accurate diagnosis. Since the chronic lung diseases may present with varying symptoms and a degree of overlap in the clinical examination, imaging techniques are imperative for differential diagnosis. Advances in imaging technologies have enhanced the precision with which the disease can be characterized.

4. Pharmacological Management of Chronic Lung Diseases

Chronic lung diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorders (COPD), lung fibrosis, and cystic fibrosis, are commonly encountered respiratory illnesses with a significant worldwide burden (Wang et al., 2023). These conditions often require long-term healthcare services, leading to increased mortality rates and healthcare expenditures. Effective medication options are available to manage chronic lung diseases in patients of all ages. Medications are aimed at treating the disease's underlying pathophysiology while alleviating its symptoms. A vital aspect of managing chronic lung diseases is addressing the patient's concerns and aligning medication regimens with their lifestyle.

Pharmacological management focuses on the safe and effective use of medications. Various medications are available to treat chronic lung diseases effectively. Bronchodilators alleviate the symptoms of chronic lung diseases and improve lung function by relaxing the airway muscles. They can be short- or long-acting. Short-acting bronchodilators provide quick relief and are commonly used for acute symptom control during an asthma attack. Long-acting bronchodilators take longer to exhibit effects but are beneficial for long-term symptom control (Rafii et al., 2011). Anti-inflammatory agents are the second group of medications vital for managing chronic lung diseases. They reduce inflammation and mucous secretion in the lungs, enhancing respiratory health. Existing biological therapies target specific pathways involved

Power System Technology
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in the pathophysiology of chronic lung diseases. Inhaled corticosteroids represent a class of biological agents commonly used to treat chronic lung diseases, especially asthma and COPD. Biological treatments are currently available for chronic lung diseases. These treatments should be integrated into a plan that addresses the patient's concerns and health goals to maximize therapeutic efficacy. Ongoing evaluation of treatment outcomes is essential to consider adjustments to medication regimens or doses. If chronic lung diseases do not respond to initial treatments, alternative medications should be considered. Recently, novel pharmacological agents have emerged that may be used in future management strategies for chronic lung diseases.

4.1. Bronchodilators and Anti-inflammatory Agents

Chronic lung diseases impose a considerable burden on both patients and healthcare systems, highlighting the necessity for effective management approaches. Pharmacological treatments play a significant role in addressing these diseases, particularly the use of bronchodilators and anti-inflammatory agents. This section focuses on these two classes of medications, exploring their mechanisms of action and roles in chronic lung disease management. Bronchodilators alleviate the sensation of breathlessness by relieving airway obstructions, making breathing easier (M et al., 2012). They are essential for managing patients with asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The responsiveness to bronchodilators classifies asthma as reversible airflow obstruction, while COPD is characterized by partially reversible airway limitation. The supporting pharmacological treatments involve using bronchodilators that expand the airways, providing symptomatic relief. Three main classes of bronchodilators exist: β-agonists, anticholinergics, and xanthines, each with specific applications (Salmon et al., 2014).

Anti-inflammatory agents reduce airway inflammation and are crucial for preventing airway remodeling and exacerbation occurrence. Corticosteroids are effective anti-inflammatory agents used in chronic lung disease management, particularly in asthmatic patients. Inhaled corticosteroids primarily target the airways, minimizing systemic effects while maintaining anti-inflammatory potency. Combination therapies utilizing both bronchodilators and anti-inflammatory medications are common in everyday pharmacological management. Patient adherence is a significant issue, with many failing to comply with the prescribed regimen, often due to misunderstanding the medications. Educating patients about pharmacological treatments and the importance of adherence is vital for successful management. Ongoing research strives to develop more effective drug formulations with fewer side effects and improved patient adherence.

Power System Technology
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4.2. Biological Therapies

Over the last few decades, the emerging field of biological therapies has brought promising alternatives for the management of chronic lung diseases. These innovations are designed to alter specific biological pathways involved in the disease processes, such as monoclonal antibodies aimed at selective modulations of inflammatory response. There is currently an array of tested monoclonal antibodies targeting different mechanisms, most treating severe asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in ongoing clinical trials. Results so far have shown efficacy (Kardas et al., 2020). Asthma and COPD are heterogeneous diseases with different phenotypes determined by risk factors such as gender, age, socioeconomics, lifestyle, and sensitivity to allergens. They usually progress from mild symptoms to chronic conditions with frequent exacerbations, which severely impact the patients' quality of life and increase their mortality risk. These pathological conditions involve progressively obstructed airways caused by smooth muscle hyperplasia, mucus hypersecretion, and other alterations of scaffolding connective tissues on which the airways are built—collectively termed airway remodeling (AR). Current therapies mostly bring partial relief and are unable to reverse the changes caused by the diseases. Therefore, novel treatment options are urgently needed.

Biological therapies targeting specific pathways in the disease progress are expected to bring more efficacy than the currently available non-specific treatments. Such therapies are currently being researched not only for asthma and COPD but also for cystic fibrosis, lung cancer, pulmonary hypertension, and pulmonary involvement in systemic diseases (C. Fellner et al., 2016). With the preclinical studies done, a number of biological treatments are now tested in clinical trials. If the probabilities based on the clinical phases taken by the drugs are correct, five new biological drugs would be available for asthma and COPD by 2025. Nonetheless, attention should be drawn to the biopharmaceuticals' benefits and challenges that need to be evaluated before their introduction to standard treatment. In this context, other chronic lung diseases should also be considered. Furthermore, a brief overview of possible future developments of precision medicine to indicate the best candidates for biological treatments is provided. The development of biological therapies in the last two decades brought a new dimension to the treatment of chronic lung diseases. It is, however, an ongoing evolution, which without proper planning can end up with dead ends and disappointments.

5. Non-Pharmacological Management Strategies

Non-pharmacological management strategies are critical for improving the quality of life for people with chronic lung diseases. These strategies are central to the philosophy of managing chronic diseases: considering a person's needs, not just pharmacological interventions. Non-pharmacological approaches include education, lifestyle modifications, psychosocial interventions, and other strategies that mitigate exposure to potential harms. Pulmonary rehabilitation is a highly effective non-pharmacological intervention for people with chronic

Power System Technology
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lung diseases, enhancing physical function, respiratory health, health-related quality of life, mood, and social participation. Rehabilitation consists of physical training, education, nutritional assistance, and psychosocial support, usually in group sessions. An individual exercise program is developed, and education focuses on disease understanding, its impact, and self-management strategies, often with an emphasis on action planning to set individual goals. Exercise training may involve walking, cycling, or a combination, tailored to each person's abilities. Typically led by physiotherapists or exercise trainers, rehabilitation sessions occur twice weekly for six to twelve weeks, and adherence to exercise programs after rehabilitation is encouraged. Pulmonary rehabilitation can occur in various settings, such as hospitals, community health services, or at home. Healthcare professionals should proactively offer rehabilitation to individuals who might benefit, considering it an essential part of chronic lung disease management. Many healthcare systems have eligibility criteria for services based on lung function or disease severity, but these should shift toward universal access. Oxygen therapy is the only treatment besides smoking cessation that has unequivocally been shown to prolong survival in appropriately selected people with chronic lung diseases. A survival benefit is present in chronic lung disease patients who qualify for oxygen therapy and use it for more than 15 hours a day. Nevertheless, 2-year mortality remains high, exceeding 50% even with oxygen therapy. Clearly delineating which patients qualify for oxygen therapy is further complicated by the underutilization of arterial blood gas sampling in outpatient settings. Non-pharmacological interventions make important and often essential complements to pharmacological treatments. Where possible and appropriate, non-pharmacological treatments should be encouraged as an integral part of care. Education and self-management strategies are effective components that can be delivered in pharmacological care settings and should be included. All patients need personalized care plans that specify treatments for the patient's needs and consider individual preferences. Care plans should generally be developed collaboratively with healthcare professionals and the individual. However, the desired approach may not happen in practice. Many healthcare systems may emphasize delivering care according to protocols and funnels information through standardized forms, which is contrary to the philosophy of person-centered care.

5.1. Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Pulmonary rehabilitation should be considered a key component in the management of chronic lung diseases. Rehabilitation substantially improves health and quality of life and reduces health services utilization. Pulmonary rehabilitation encompasses more than just exercise, although structured exercise programs are a core component. Education and self-management strategies improve knowledge, health beliefs, and self-efficacy, leading to a positive effect on health-related quality of life and a reduction in health services use. Multidisciplinary teams are best placed to deliver effective pulmonary rehabilitation services, which is one of the most critical aspects of service design and delivery. The evidence supporting pulmonary

Power System Technology
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rehabilitation's effectiveness is compelling. Individual programs tailored to patients' unique needs enhance engagement and outcomes. Programs should also include ongoing support and reinforcement of the self-management strategies learned, preferably from the original providers of rehabilitation (Santus et al., 2013).

Despite the wealth of evidence on the effectiveness of pulmonary rehabilitation in chronic lung disease, it remains grossly underutilized. Pulmonary rehabilitation is poorly integrated into routine care practices. It is vital that all professionals involved in the management of chronic lung disease advocate for and actively promote the integration of pulmonary rehabilitation into standard care practices. The gradual demise of the original rehabilitation program for emphysema patients was out of concern regarding the pulmonary rehabilitation philosophy's apparent abandonment. However, because of all interventions aimed at a better health status, nothing is more effective than rehabilitation. Rehabilitation means restoring to a state of health, which implies the necessity of creating or sustaining a health asset (Vaishali et al., 2019).

5.2. Oxygen Therapy

Oxygen Therapy Patients with chronic lung diseases (CLDs) often experience progressive hypoxia and hypercapnia. These abnormalities trigger various compensatory mechanisms by the body but at the same time exert significant stress on multiple organ systems leading to clinical symptoms. Oxygen therapy is a treatment modality that addresses one of the main causes of stress on organ systems: hypoxia (Budweiser et al., 2008). By delivering supplemental oxygen, it maintains optimal oxygen saturation levels in the blood (usually above 90-92%) throughout the day and effectively reduces related symptoms such as fatigue, dizziness, and sleepiness. Oxygen therapy also enhances exercise tolerance by maintaining optimal oxygen saturation levels during activities. Residual stress and damage on the heart and other organs from hypoxia are important contributors to mortality from CLDs. Therefore, good oxygenation is crucial in the comprehensive management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), pulmonary fibrosis, and other similar diseases.

Oxygen can be delivered to the body by various means. Nasal cannulas connected to oxygen tanks or concentrators are the most common delivery methods. Oxygen tanks are portable containers filled with oxygen gas under high pressure, while concentrators compress air and pass it through thick pores that absorb nitrogen gas, resulting in more than 90% oxygen gas in the output air. The delivery method and equipment options vary based on the quantity of oxygen needed, which is usually determined by a physician. Patients acquire a set of equipment and delivery methods after being prescribed oxygen therapy by a physician. Patients need to operate these devices daily to ensure regular oxygen intake as prescribed, and any failure to do so can result in adverse outcomes. Therefore, tailoring oxygen therapy plans based on each patient's needs and clinical status is important.

Power System Technology
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Typically, a physician prescribes a set of required input parameters for oxygen therapy that best suit the patient's health status and needs. However, many patients fail to adhere to therapy as prescribed or have equipment availability issues due to environmental limitations. Ensuring patients understand the importance of therapy, how it works, equipment handling, and the consequences of not adhering to therapy is crucial for good health outcomes. Filling this knowledge gap is the priority of this chapter. Oxygen therapy is complex and encompasses different treatment plans with multiple considerations such as the type and settings of equipment, frequency and duration of therapy, and handling procedures. Therefore, only the critical aspects of therapy are summarized (McDonald et al., 2005).

6. Emerging Technologies and Therapies in Chronic Lung Disease Management

Telemedicine, remote monitoring, and digital health solutions are groundbreaking technologies currently shaping the management of chronic lung diseases. Contemporary health systems often struggle to provide patients with persistent access to healthcare expertise, an issue amplified for populations living in rural settings who often experience long travel distances to healthcare clinics. Efforts to enhance healthcare personnel availability, efficiency, and equity through the deployment of technology-supported solutions have been evidenced in the management of various chronic conditions, including chronic lung diseases. Leveraged technology can benefit patient management by enabling continuous patient monitoring and facilitating timely interventions, thus avoiding exacerbations and hospital visits. Models built around technology can better engage patients in their own health, complementing clinical visit-based care with regular insight into their health (W Costello et al., 2017). The integration of technology-supported solutions into patient management has the potential to reshape the patient-clinician relationship from one traditionally based upon intermittent and often reactive interventions on patient initiatives to one providing proactive, continuous, and disease state-guided support.

Technology-supported solutions often take advantage of connected sensors that collect relevant health data remotely from the patient, in combination with a data viewing platform for healthcare service providers. The health data collected by the devices can be either streamed and viewed in real-time for online patient monitoring or stored and analyzed post-hoc, generating health status reports that can be reviewed by healthcare experts. The ability to monitor patients outside clinical settings can improve disease control by allowing health data review at the time of triggered health concerns, thus facilitating timely interventions and reducing the need for hospital visits. Patient-independent health data access can also improve the sensitivity of data review, enabling the identification of otherwise undetected trends in disease progression and medication efficacy. Such technology-supported solutions have been successfully employed in chronic lung disease management, exhibiting the ability to

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characteristically segregate patients with different disease states based on the health data retrieved from the devices.

6.1. Telemedicine and Digital Health Solutions

The increasing burden of chronic lung diseases has sparked an urgent need for innovative strategies to address related limitations in health systems. The global threats posed by the recent COVID-19 pandemic underscore the demand for an expedited transition towards telemedicine and digital health solutions in the management of chronic lung diseases. These technologies have the potential to significantly transform the management of chronic lung diseases by facilitating remote consultations with healthcare professionals while ensuring the continuous monitoring of patient progress to enable timely medical intervention. In the care of chronic lung diseases, telehealth technologies are expected to overcome barriers to the availability, accessibility, and acceptability of care, particularly for patients living in remote areas currently facing difficulties in accessing specialist care. Digital health tools have been developed and tested in clinical settings to improve patient engagement and self-management of care. These tools may include mobile apps that facilitate the collection of medication adherence data through validated patient questionnaires and uploads of adherence data from smart inhalers, as well as wearable devices that continuously monitor patients' physical activity levels and automatically transmit data to health professionals. By increasing patients' awareness of their treatment adherence, these solutions promote adherence to treatment plans, thereby significantly contributing to improved health outcomes. Nevertheless, there remain several challenges and limitations associated with the implementation of telemedicine in chronic lung disease care. The access, quality, and appropriateness of telecommunications technologies and the internet can vary markedly across different regions and communities, leading to health disparities among underserved patients and those with limited technology access (Simeone et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the expanding application of these technologies has the potential to enable personalized care approaches and access to continuous monitoring of patients in real-time for health professionals.

6.2. Gene Therapy and Stem Cell Research

Emerging therapies targeting chronic lung diseases offer promise for the future. Gene therapy is being developed to correct the genetic defect responsible for pathological events in the disease. This approach may be relevant to cystic fibrosis (CF) and other chronic lung conditions with a known genetic basis. Although CF is a rare disorder, it is considered the prototype of chronic lung disease in the young, as it irreversibly damages the lungs early in life. In CF, the epithelial chloride channel, cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator (CFTR), is malfunctioning due to mutations in the CFTR gene. A series of preclinical and early clinical studies evaluated the safety and feasibility of administering recombinant adeno-associated virus vectors containing the wild-type CFTR complementary DNA. Although some

Power System Technology
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therapeutically relevant data were obtained, improvements in vector design and delivery are urgently needed to develop this approach further in patients with CF (E. Hynds, 2022).

Revolutionary therapies that aim to restore lung function by repairing damaged lung tissue or even replacing it are also being explored. Mechanisms causing chronic lung diseases begin with insults that damage or destroy functioning lung parenchyma. A reasonable and appealing approach to chronic lung diseases, then, is to develop therapies that repair or replace damaged tissue. In this context, stem cells are of particular interest since they are thought to be capable of regenerating lung tissue. The feasibility of transplanting stem cells or stem cell-derived cells into the lungs to restore normal function is compelling and has been actively investigated. Realizing this approach would not only halt the progression of chronic lung diseases but might also completely reverse the pathology.

Despite great progress in understanding the pathophysiology of chronic lung diseases and extensive research on candidate therapies, there are almost no therapies that have been successfully implemented in clinical practice. However, numerous innovative approaches are being researched and some are in clinical trials worldwide. This critical review discusses the rationale behind genetic and regenerative medicine approaches to chronic lung diseases, their limitations, and challenges for the future. It is hoped that this overview will highlight the need for translational research to enable the application of these therapies as soon as possible.

7. Challenges and Future Directions in Chronic Lung Disease Research

Researching chronic lung diseases is complex and significant due to challenges in disease management, technological adoption, and health disparities. Despite advancements, post-2020 progress in addressing chronic lung diseases has been insufficient. Unmet patient needs persist, highlighting disparities in access to consideration, solution development, and adherence to care plans, particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged demographics and rural areas. Systemic difficulties affecting marginalized populations' access to health are crucial and should be addressed through strict regulation of decision-makers' responses to the disease and its societal determinants (Sandra Gould et al., 2023). Considered and equitable health systems should respond to care-related needs of various population segments, understanding the multi-sectorial socio-economic system context impacting health.

Precision medicine is crucial, involving treating individuals based on unique patient characteristics under specific health profiles rather than providing the same treatment for a condition. Population groups exposed similarly to risk factors may develop different disease profiles. Understanding the effects of external risk factors on individual health status necessitates data collection and experience aggregation across space and time. Focusing on epidemiological questions related to data space representativeness is essential. For chronic conditions, post-event data interpretation influenced by risk factors generating care-related

Power System Technology
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events is necessary. For long-term chronic conditions, managing different pathologies simultaneously across care sectors is needed, creating model quantification challenges.

Future research focuses on enhancing chronic disease understanding through diverse data aggregation, interpretation, epidemiological question framing, and model use in contemporary care organization consideration. Priorities include: 1. Data alignment space development for epidemiological questions; 2. Consideration of data aggregation limits on model applicability; 3. Worldwide cooperation and standards in contiguous data collection and disease monitoring; 4. Model design and applicability limits consideration in contemporary care organization context. Cooperation among researchers, providers, and decision-makers is critical in addressing chronic disease-related challenges. Data collection methodology innovations and care organization changes will attract modelers to chronic disease research. Innovations will enhance accessible technology use for diverse data collection and aggregation. Planning epidemiological question-related data accessibility is crucial.

7.1. Health Disparities and Access to Care

Chronic lung diseases affect millions of people worldwide and represent a major threat to global health, with a rising burden in developing countries. Although treatment is available, access to care per population is often linked to a range of socio-economic factors. In a globalized world, it can seem strange that such health disparities persist. Nevertheless, social determinants of health still have a significant impact on disease outcome and management. Factors such as race, ethnicity, social class, gender, or geographical location can constrain access to health care, limit availability of treatment options, or determine quality of care provided (A Pleasants et al., 2016). Poor education and housing conditions, lack of income, job security, or social support networks can increase the burden of disease, particularly for the most vulnerable population groups. The aim is to present an overview of the persistent disparities in health care access for patients with chronic lung diseases. By highlighting specific examples of very unequal health care systems, it is hoped to raise awareness of the need for equitable health care solutions to these problems. Where possible and appropriate, initiatives that attempt to improve access are presented. Efforts may range from local community health programs to national policies promoting inclusivity in service delivery. Regardless of their scale, collaboration across institutions and with the communities they serve is vital to enhancing health care provision. While many of the disparities discussed herein are global challenges, a detailed analysis of one geographic region is presented. By explicitly addressing the issues endemic to this region, it is hoped to better illustrate the problems and potential solutions. Nevertheless, many issues are well recognized as global challenges in health care. It is critical to recognize these challenges if an equitable approach to health care is to be adopted and gaps in health care access bridged.

Power System Technology
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7.2. Precision Medicine

Precision medicine is a concept that emerged as an innovative approach to address complex multifactorial chronic diseases, such as chronic lung diseases. It aims for a change in the paradigm from a "one-size-fits-all" to a "tailored" treatment. These disease management strategies take into consideration the patient-specific characteristics, such as genetics, epigenetics, transcriptomics, proteomics, metabolomics, microbiomics, socio-economic, lifestyle, as well as environmental exposures in order to personalize treatment decisions (ME Franssen et al., 2019). By such approaches, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma treatment could be advanced by increasing the therapeutic efficacy, and at the same time minimizing unwanted adverse effects, by customizing the interventions. During the last two decades, major efforts were put toward finding relevant biomarkers that can adequately predict the treatment response of a drug, its safety, or the disease progression (M.G. Halpin, 2022). Nowadays, the omics sciences can provide a huge variety of data on biological samples that could be used for the identification of relevant biomarkers. Additionally, the collected data can be used to develop algorithms based on statistical and/or artificial intelligence approaches that can refine the patient outcomes.

This conception of precision medicine can also be found under the labels of personalized, stratified, targeted medicine, and it significantly influences the translational research in chronic diseases. However, implementation of the precision medicine approaches in routine clinical practice remains challenging due to many factors, like the high costs of such research and treatment strategies, thus limiting their accessibility. The aim is to highlight recent steps and ongoing research in the field of chronic lung diseases regarding the implementation of the precision medicine concept, establishing it as the future transformative conceptual framework.

8. Conclusion and Implications for Clinical Practice

The challenges associated in the management of chronic lung diseases, including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), have been recognized for many years by various global alliances and institutions committed to improving health. Despite substantial progress, many factors still significantly impact the burden of chronic lung diseases. Treatments based on pharmacological and non-pharmacological approaches have been shown to be effective in improving the morbidity and mortality of chronic lung diseases. However, these treatment strategies are often underutilized, not used as intended, or inadequately applied (Sandra Gould et al., 2023). Therefore, philosophically, the focus is on modern researchers topic to enhance management strategies that could bridge some of the existing gaps in knowledge, understanding, and application. Based on the reviewed literature, research, and clinical experience, several considerations to enhance patient care in chronic lung diseases are discussed. Management strategies considering multidisciplinary, education-based approaches, and integration of innovative technologies that could enhance accessibility and compliance are

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crucial. Pharmacological treatment targets should be personalized to avoid under-treatment and side effects. Integration of evidence-based treatment strategies into daily practice is essential. Finally, current and future challenges to research care and implications for clinical practice strategies are addressed. Chronic lung diseases currently account for over 8% of deaths worldwide. Nations must make concerted efforts to tackle these diseases, especially in vulnerable populations with compromised environments, unregulated industrialization, or limited healthcare systems. In this context, incorporating research questions as pillars into national health policies is pivotal to addressing health inequities. Hence, continued research efforts in management strategy optimization are vital to bridging some existing gaps.

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