

SPEAKER 1: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or COPD, is a group of diseases that block air flow and cause breathing difficulty. Smoking is one of the most common causes of COPD. And up to 20% of smokers develop COPD.

Individuals with COPD may also have reduced oxygen to the brain. But very few studies have looked at the association between COPD and cognitive impairment.

So in the Mayo Clinic, a study of aging, which is a population-based study based in Olmsted County, Minnesota, we examined whether COPD among individuals that were cognitively normal at baseline increased the risk of cognitive impairment over up to about a seven-year follow-up. And we did find that individuals with a diagnosis of COPD at baseline, especially those that had a diagnosis for five years or longer, were at over a two-fold increased risk of developing cognitive impairment. And this was primarily problems with attention, and also with planning and judgment.

So this research suggests that COPD is indeed a risk factor for mild cognitive impairment and that physicians need to watch for cognitive changes among individuals with COPD.