

Questions to address underreporting of breathlessness by patients



People living with chronic breathlessness experience progressive limitations in activities as the syndrome worsens, with more strenuous activities first affected.¹

However, there is evidence that people underestimate the severity of their chronic breathlessness due to actively avoiding things that cause breathlessness.¹



As part of its commitment to support the **PAH Patient Charter** mandate for timely diagnosis, Janssen recently sponsored a consumer survey to understand the barriers for undiagnosed patients and the general public in managing breathlessness.

The survey of 2,000 Australians found a low level of awareness of the potential severity of breathlessness²:

- Only 16% thought that breathlessness is highly likely to be a sign of a serious medical condition.²
- Over three quarters of Aussies surveyed (78%) responded that they would stop or pause an activity if it made them short of breath.²
- Close to half (48%) said they would wait until they were experiencing shortness of breath several times a week before booking their own appointment with a GP.²

We all now know too many pulmonary arterial hypertension patients go undiagnosed for too long — more than 3 in 4 patients with PAH have advanced, potentially irreversible disease before they get a diagnosis.³

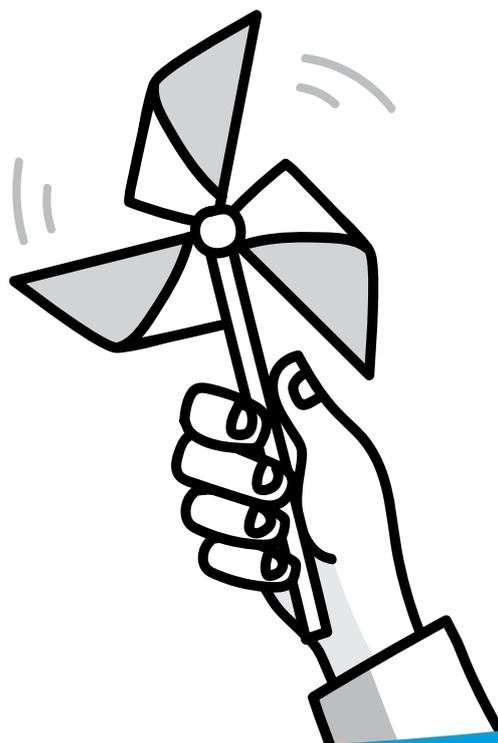
Are you certain all your patients with unexplained breathlessness have been screened appropriately?

Here are some questions to ask patients who you suspect live with breathlessness⁴:

- If you have to climb two flights of stairs, two at a time, how do you feel at the top?
- How does that compare with the recent past?
- Do you ever feel tired or breathless after getting ready in the morning or playing with your kids/grandkids/pets?
- If you rush to answer the phone, does it take you long to speak normally again or do you remain breathless for some time?

- Have your friends and family noticed that you have become breathless lately, or more often?
- Though you say that you are feeling well generally, how are you when you have been for your regular exercise compared with a year ago?
- Do you find yourself breathless more quickly than previously?
- Do you take longer to do the housework than you did a year ago?
- Do you put off the housework because of this or other reasons?
- Do you find yourself avoiding excursions or activities in case you experience breathlessness?
- Do you use the lift rather than the stairs?
- Do you avoid any other activities so that you don't become short of breath?
- When was the last time you climbed more than one flight of stairs?

For all unexplained breathlessness and any other signs of cardio-pulmonary dysfunction follow the diagnosis algorithm which includes a cardiac echo to check for left and right heart disease.⁵



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Telephone:1800226334 www.janssen.com/australia CP-304793 Mar 2022

¹Kochovska, et al. Activities Forgone because of Chronic Breathlessness: A Cross-Sectional Population Prevalence Study. *Palliative Medicine Reports*. Dec 2020;166-170. <http://doi.org/10.1089/pmr.2020.0083>

²Data on file – market research 2022. Exact answers: * Exact percentage was 16.2% for Q9, 77.7% for Q6 and 48.5%

³Khou, K et al. Diagnostic delay in pulmonary arterial hypertension: Insights from the Australian and New Zealand pulmonary hypertension registry. *Respirology*. 2020 Aug;25(8):863-871

⁴Janssen. Questionnaire on Suspect PH. Available at: <https://suspectph.com.au/suspect/physical-examination/>

⁵Karnani NG, et al. *Am Fam Physician* 2005; 71: 1529-37