

CONQUEST: A Quality Improvement Program for Defining and Optimizing Standards of Care for Modifiable High-risk COPD patients

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

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1. WHAT IS THE CONQUEST PROGRAM?

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a lung disease that affects millions of people around the world and often gets worse over time. Opportunities to diagnose COPD and improve the care patients with COPD receive can often be missed in busy doctor's surgeries and health clinics.

CONQUEST is a new program that supports healthcare teams to identify these missed opportunities and provides a framework for improving care. The aim is to instigate long-term changes to the quality of care COPD patients receive and improve disease outcomes.

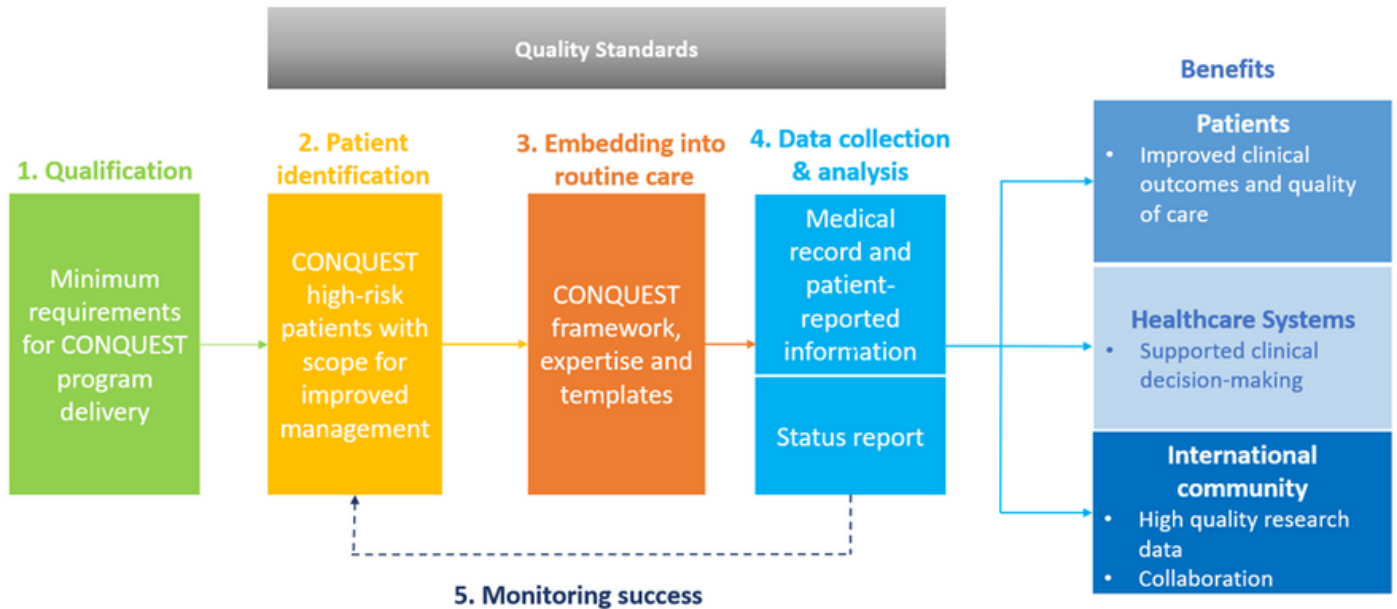
The CONQUEST program focuses on patients considered to be at a modifiable, but higher risk of disease flare-ups (known as exacerbations). This could be patients who already have a diagnosis of COPD, or those who may have COPD based on past symptoms, but who have not yet been diagnosed. We describe these patients as 'modifiable high-risk' because, with timely diagnosis and treatment, the risks associated with their COPD can be reduced.

Four Quality Standards developed with these higher-risk patients in mind guide the program and provide a foundation for how patients are i) identified (including diagnostic tests if needed), ii) assessed, iii) treated and iv) followed-up over time.

2. HOW WILL IT WORK?

Figure 1 shows the overall processes of the CONQUEST program. The first step for any healthcare system or site wishing to join CONQUEST is to ensure they can meet the minimum requirements to deliver the program. Healthcare systems must have an electronic health record system that can be used to both automatically identify high-risk patients, and to store data that can later be extracted to assess the effect of the program.

Figure 1: The CONQUEST process



3. WHAT ARE THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS?

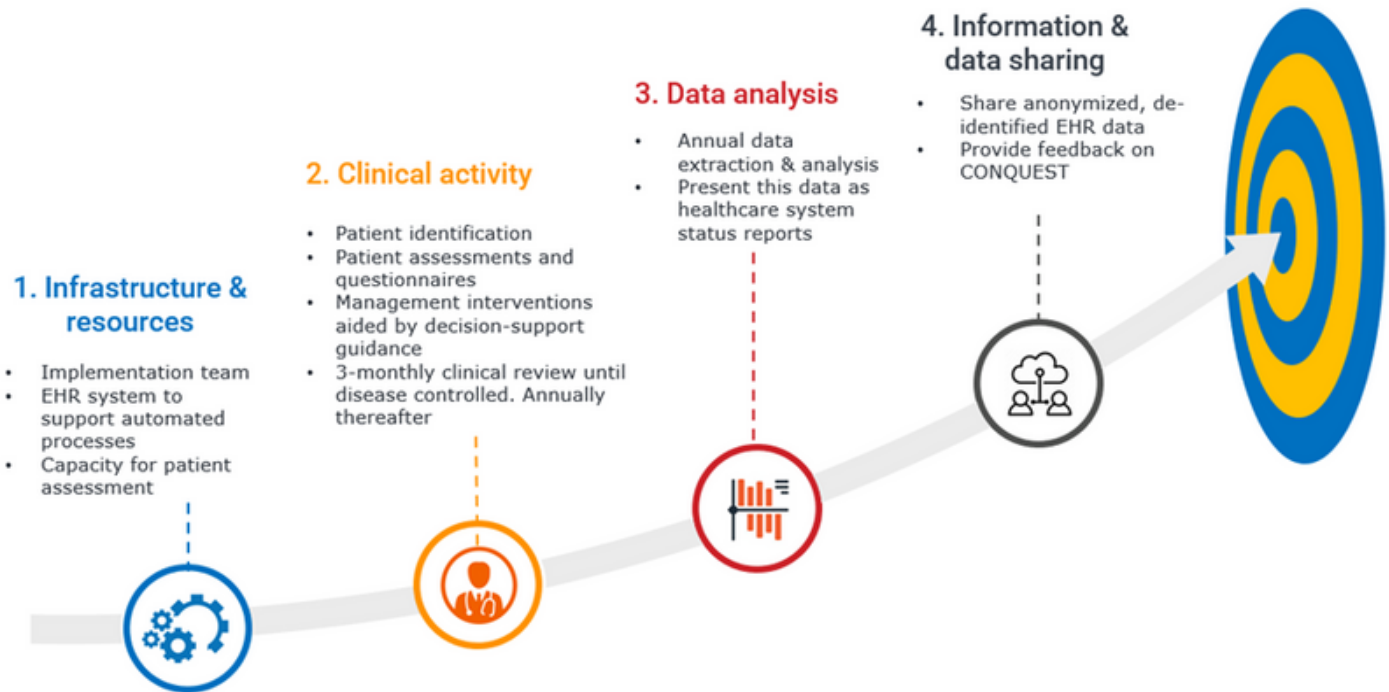
Figure 2 highlights some of the 'minimum requirements' for healthcare systems joining the CONQUEST program.

The next steps in the process (steps 2-5 in Figure 1) translate the quality standards described above into specific activities that the healthcare team undertake throughout the program. These activities then become embedded into everyday patient care and ensure that program outcomes are regularly monitored.

Healthcare systems who join the CONQUEST program are supported in the process by provision of:

- A detailed framework guiding them through key aspects of setting up and running the program.
- Technical expertise (available within this framework) to aid patient identification and development of healthcare system status reports for program monitoring.
- Questionnaire templates for use in obtaining information directly from patients - a key element required in CONQUEST to make the best decisions about patient care.
- A package of information that helps clinicians assimilate information and make management decisions about each patient.

Figure 2: Summary of Minimum Requirements for CONQUEST program delivery



4. HOW WILL WE KNOW IF CONQUEST HAS IMPROVED CARE?

An important part of the CONQUEST program is regular collection and analysis of information from electronic health records to determine how COPD care and patient outcomes have been altered by the program. This information is collated into annual ‘status reports’.

While this process allows sites to evaluate changes to care in their own system, it is also provides the opportunity for sharing knowledge and collaborating internationally (within the bounds of ethical and privacy requirements).

Additionally, a scientific evaluation of the CONQUEST program is planned. Outcomes in healthcare systems implementing the CONQUEST program will be compared to those in systems who continue usual care for their COPD patients. This will tell us how well, and in what ways, the program improves care.

5. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE CONQUEST PROGRAM?

The CONQUEST program has potential benefits from several perspectives.



PATIENTS BENEFIT THROUGH IMPROVED QUALITY OF CARE AND HEALTH OUTCOMES



HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS THROUGH SUPPORTED CLINICAL DECISION MAKING



THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY THROUGH COLLECTION OF HIGH-QUALITY DATA THAT MAY BE USED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH INTO COPD CARE.