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Project Title

Understanding healthy aging of the lungs

Project Summary

With each breath, our lungs store a record of our surroundings. Consequently, the lungs can tell us a lot about our overall health. With each harmful exposure (e.g., tobacco smoke, air pollution) the chances of developing lung disease and dying prematurely increase. The most common test to measure how well the lungs work requires that people forcefully empty all of the air in their lungs. As we age, this test becomes more difficult to do. We can't be sure that lower lung function in older adults means someone has lung disease, or if this is due to technical performance of the test or weaker breathing muscles (i.e., healthy aging). This makes it difficult to know who has lung disease. There are two large Canadian studies with very useful information that may help. By combining the information already collected from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) and the Canadian Cohort of Obstructive Lung Disease (CanCOLD) we can better differentiate healthy aging from disease and describe the lung health of the Canadian population.

Keywords

chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), lung health, spirometry, environment