

“Looking beyond the lung in IPF treatment”

IPF is a chronic lung disease characterized by scarring of lung tissue, leading to progressively decreased lung function. However, many IPF patients may also suffer from additional non-lung-related health problems or co-morbidities, such as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), thromboembolism, coronary artery disease, and depression.

For instance, up to 94% of IPF patients showed evidence of GERD in a prior study. “GERD is almost universal among IPF patients,” suggests Dr. Harold Collard, associate professor at the UCSF School of Medicine. Some even believe that GERD may play a role in worsening the progression of IPF.

Additionally, research by Dr. Matsuda in Japan and Dr. Glaspole in Australia suggest that approximately one of every five IPF patients battles with clinical depression. The future of IPF treatment will likely involve an increased focus on these co-morbidities in an effort to improve overall patient quality of life.

“Many conditions are present at a higher rate in the IPF population by comparison to healthy controls – we need to look at these and manage them”, argues Dr. Collard.