

The Severe Asthma Toolkit

A new online resource for clinicians

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The Severe Asthma Toolkit is a new online resource developed by the NHMRC. It aims to assist clinicians involved in the management of people with severe asthma.

Key points

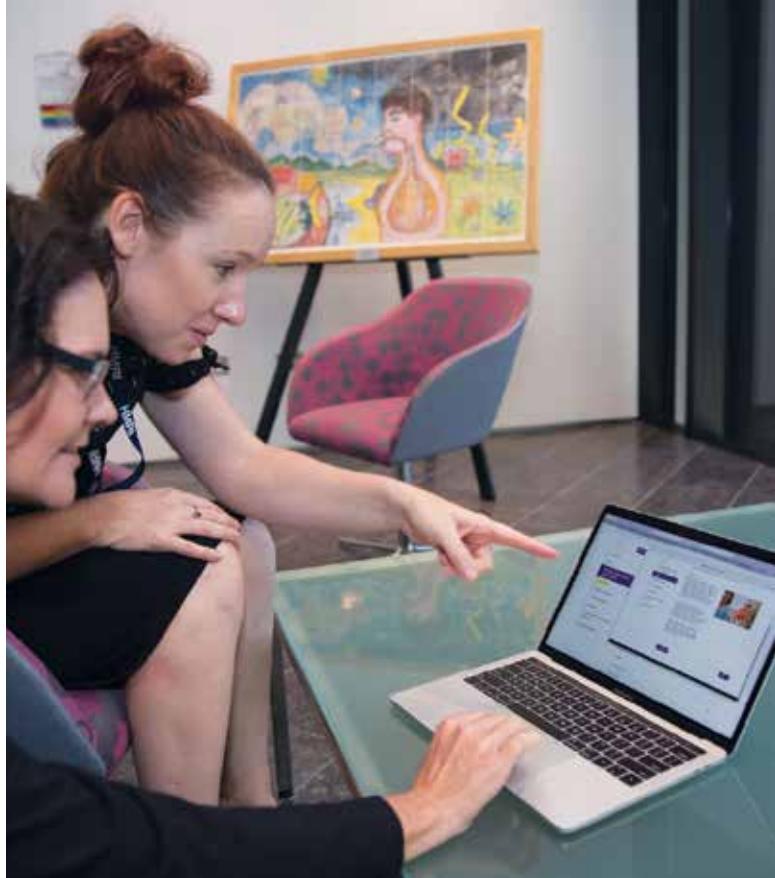
- **The Severe Asthma Toolkit provides a one-stop education and training resource for clinicians involved in managing people with severe asthma.**
- **The Severe Asthma Toolkit contains a comprehensive repository of resources that are useful for practice.**
- **The Severe Asthma Toolkit was developed by clinicians for clinicians.**
- **The Severe Asthma Toolkit can be found at <http://toolkit.severeasthma.org.au>.**

RESPIRATORY MEDICINE TODAY 2018; 3(1): 26-27

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© THE SEVERE ASTHMA TOOLKIT; THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN SEVERE ASTHMA CONCEIVED AND DEVELOPED THE TOOLKIT WITH FUNDING BY THE NHMRC. IT WAS LAUNCHED AT THE THORACIC SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND'S ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING IN ADELAIDE ON 26 MARCH 2018.



The NHMRC Centre of Excellence in Severe Asthma has developed and launched a new clinical 'toolkit' for the purpose of improving the management of people with severe asthma. The Severe Asthma Toolkit is a contemporary and independent educational and training website that provides clinicians with the latest information and resources for optimising care of patients with severe asthma. It has been developed by a group of multidisciplinary clinicians from around Australia and internationally.

The target audience is broad and includes practitioners in primary and tertiary care, and all disciplines involved in severe asthma management, including GPs, nurses, physiotherapists, speech pathologists, pharmacists and psychologists. It is hoped that the toolkit will also be a high-level education and training resource for clinicians in geographically diverse regions who may otherwise need to travel for such information. The Severe Asthma Toolkit is available online at <http://toolkit.severeasthma.org.au>.

The Severe Asthma Toolkit was developed to bridge gaps recognised in training resources aimed at clinicians involved in the management of people with severe asthma. Over many years, there have been advances made in the outcomes for patients with mild-to-moderate asthma, and many excellent resources have been developed for patients and clinicians alike. However, severe asthma represents a different disease from mild-to-moderate asthma:

- it responds differently to traditional management
- it has increased treatment requirements
- it causes a greater illness burden
- it is associated with complex comorbidities
- it results in more frequent and severe attacks occasioning hospitalisations and death.



Figure. Modules in the Severe Asthma Toolkit.

Fewer than 10% of people with asthma have severe treatment-refractory disease, yet they account for more than 60% of all asthma-related healthcare costs.¹⁻³ There is an urgent and growing need to deliver effective care for this population.

Until this century, treatment choices for people with severe asthma were limited. Fortunately, there is renewed hope for this population of patients. As we enter an era of targeted or precision-based medicine, an increasing number of novel treatments have become available. These new treatments mean that the organisation of care for patients with severe asthma needs to change, and new approaches need to be implemented into practice. The toolkit is a practical resource to help optimise these goals.

The modules of the Severe Asthma Toolkit

The Severe Asthma Toolkit has been designed in modules that are easy to navigate (Box). Each module addresses relevant aspects of an area of care (Box and Figure).

The aim of the Living with Severe Asthma module is to present a person-centred view of the experience of people living with severe asthma, covering topics such as daily symptom burden, intimacy, mental health and the impact of treatment, to name a few.

Recognising the challenges of organising and delivering care for people with such a complex disease, a module was created to guide clinicians on the establishment of a severe asthma service and highlight recommended referral pathways.

The resource centre hosts a repository of tools that can be used in practice. The tools include recommended questionnaires, webinar presentations delivered by international experts and useful videos.

Each module can be reviewed as a stand-alone topic, allowing clinicians to drop in and out at times that most suit them, whether

Modules in the Severe Asthma Toolkit

- What is severe asthma?
- Diagnosis and assessment
- Management
- Medications
- Comorbidities
- Living with severe asthma
- Establishing a clinic
- Paediatrics
- Resources

that be when they are in the clinic with patients or during periods of professional development.

Summary

It is hoped that the Severe Asthma Toolkit provides primary care clinicians with a one-stop resource to assist with the management of people with severe asthma.

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COMPETING INTERESTS: Professor McDonald has received grants and personal fees from GlaxoSmithKline and AstraZeneca and personal fees from Menarini. Professor Gibson has received grants and personal fees from GlaxoSmithKline and AstraZeneca and personal fees from Novartis.