**Title:** Self-Management in Pulmonary Rehabilitation: A focus group study with ex-pulmonary rehab patients, Breathe Easy support group members and Healthcare Professionals.

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**Background:**

Pulmonary rehabilitation is associated with positive improvements in functional status, but the benefits obtained in exercise performance, quality of life, and symptoms with pulmonary rehabilitation diminish over time. A recent British Thoracic Society audit revealed that there are significant barriers to attending pulmonary rehabilitation leading to high drop-out rates. This study aimed to explore the factors influencing long-term participation with pulmonary rehabilitation.

**Methods:**

Focus groups were carried out with a purposive sample of ex-pulmonary rehabilitation patients (2 groups, total 4 participants), healthcare professionals (2 groups, total 8 participants) and Breathe Easy support group members (2 groups, total 8 participants). Verbatim transcripts formed the basis for thematic network analysis.

**Results:**

Preliminary analysis revealed global themes including self-management, psychological support and motivation. These were recognised by all participants but expressions of the underlying meaning varied between groups. For example motivation within the healthcare professionals group focussed around the value of a support network and group dynamics; within the ex-pulmonary rehabilitation patients it centralised around the positive feedback from improved outcomes and in the Breathe Easy group the social interaction and friendships were seen as key support mechanisms.

**Conclusions:**

An enhanced understanding of these alternative perspectives between groups is a necessary first step in the development of strategies to facilitate improved long-term active participation with pulmonary rehabilitation programmes.