

Background

- The United Kingdom has an ageing population and frailty is often a consequence (1), with a prevalence of 10% in those over 65 years old and increasing with age (1).
- Chronic breathlessness is debilitating (2), affecting approximately 1/3 of older adults (3), and is also associated with psychological distress (4,5).
- We have limited understanding about the impact of chronic breathlessness on older, frail adults in the community setting.
- For the purposes of this research, chronic breathlessness is defined as a self-report of breathlessness for most days in the last month.

Aim

- To determine the prevalence of chronic breathlessness and to identify associated psychological concerns in older, frail adults in the community.

Research Questions

- 1) How **common** is chronic breathlessness in the older, frail population?
- 2) Is chronic breathlessness associated with **psychological problems**, in the older, frail population?

Methods

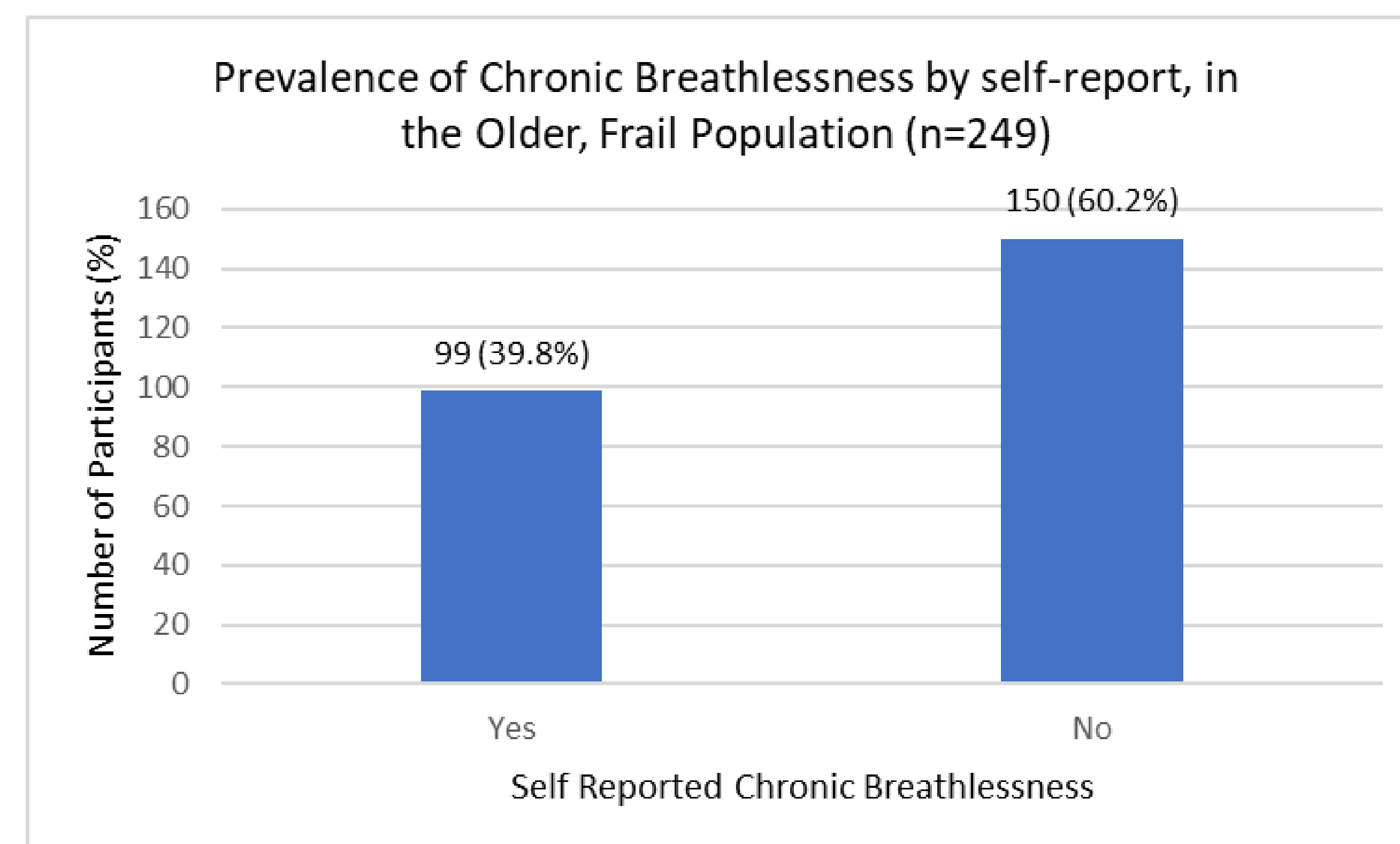
- An observational cross-sectional survey was conducted as part of a service evaluation of a new Integrated Care Clinic for frail older adults.
- Those ≥65 at risk of severe frailty were recruited at their multi-disciplinary pro-active assessment.
- The survey included the Integrated Palliative care Outcome Scale (IPOS), and a bespoke screening question for chronic breathlessness, "Have you suffered with breathlessness for most days in the last month?"
- Descriptive statistics reported clinical characteristics for those *with* and *without* chronic breathlessness.
- Associations between chronic breathlessness and psychological concerns were explored using Odds Ratios (OR).

Clinical Characteristics

- Those older, frail adults *with chronic breathlessness* were younger, more socioeconomically deprived, more commonly past/current smokers, had worse frailty scores, and were more obese than those *without chronic breathlessness*.

Results: Research Question 1

- *Ninety-nine of 249 (39.8%) survey respondents self-reported chronic breathlessness.*
- The median age was 80.
- Sixty-one percent were women.



Results: Research Question 2

- Those *with* chronic breathlessness had *increased odds of having anxiety, family anxiety, and depression* compared to those *without* chronic breathlessness.
- Findings were *independent of age or sex*.

Independent Variable	N (%)	OR	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper
IPOS Anxiety	248 (99.6)	2.230	1.293	3.846
IPOS Family Anxiety	247 (99.2)	2.026	1.204	3.408
IPOS Depression	248 (99.6)	1.944	1.115	3.390

Conclusions

- **Chronic breathlessness is common in older, frail adults.**
- These individuals had **increased odds of psychological concerns such as anxiety (personal and family) or depression.**
- Chronic breathlessness should be **actively identified and managed within primary care**, including interventions to address any associated psychological concerns.

References

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