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Lay abstract

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Patterns of healthcare activity that predate an Acute Care episode

This study aims to evaluate whether it is possible to use the pattern of contacts a person has with healthcare staff to identify those who are at high risk of requiring urgent care in the following weeks. In initially studying whether this approach has value, we are looking specifically at people who have chronic chest conditions such as COPD or Asthma. Previous research has identified changes in breathing tests or combinations of particular symptoms that may indicate such an increased risk; in this case we are using the fact that we are able to study a very large number of people to assess whether a more basic measure seems also to offer useful information - and if so, how sensitive and specific such a measure might be.