

Focus Group Interview Guide

Patient Perspectives on Cough Symptom Severity

1) Welcome, consent process, and introduction

a. Welcome

Good morning/afternoon/evening and welcome to our session.

Thanks for taking the time to join us and to talk about chronic cough symptoms. My name is _____ and assisting me is _____. The goal of this study is to develop a patient-reported outcome measurement of cough severity that can be used in clinical trials and potentially in clinical practice to assess the effectiveness of therapies for patients with chronic cough. We are meeting with patients with chronic cough to better understand what items, domains, and concepts are relevant to assess cough severity. We would like to talk to you today to explore any attributes about your cough. We also would like to identify and discuss, in your view, what issues, concerns, and short-term impacts are important and related to your chronic cough severity. Finally, we would like to identify what language and terminology you use to describe your cough.

b. Consent Process

As a group, we are going to go over the informed consent form before we start our focus group to be sure that you understand why we are having this focus group and to be sure that you voluntarily want to participate.

c. About the focus group

- Ask the group if anyone has participated in a focus group before. Explain that focus groups are being used more and more to gain information to further inform future trials, study planning, etc.
- You are the experts
- We are not trying to get everyone to agree or achieve consensus

2) Focus group logistics and ground rules

a) Logistics

- Focus group will last 60-90 minutes
- Feel free to move around
- If the Internet connection is poor, please re-join the Zoom focus group with the provided link to the meeting

b) Ground Rules

- Everyone should participate and only one person talks at a time
- It is important for us to hear everyone's ideas and opinions
- There are no right or wrong answers to questions – just ideas, experiences and opinions, which are all valuable

• The session will be audio recorded to help us gather more detailed information about your responses, and it will allow us to double check our data for accuracy. All videos should remain off. Stay with the group, please don't have side conversations, and speak clearly to increase recording quality

- Turn off or silence cell phones
- Please refrain from recording the focus group session
- Enjoy the discussions

Ask the group if there are any questions before starting.

Turn on Recorder

Focus Group Questions

1. Please describe what happens before, during and immediately after your cough.
2. What symptoms, sensations, and/or triggers do you experience that lead up to a cough?
 - a. Do you find the urge-to-cough sensation more severe than the cough itself?
 - b. How would you describe the intensity of your urge-to-cough sensation?
3. What symptoms do you experience during a severe cough?
 - a. What are sound terms that you use to describe a more severe cough?
 - b. Do you perceive a wet, productive cough to have different severity from a dry, non-productive cough?
4. What are the symptoms that occur immediately (within minutes) of experiencing a severe cough?
 - a. How long does it take for you to recover from a severe cough episode? Do you consider the time to recover from a cough a measure of cough severity?
5. How would you describe a less severe cough from a more severe cough?
6. How would you describe the intensity of your cough?
7. Which is easier to recall: the number of coughs within an episode or the duration of that episode?
8. Do you perceive the number of bursts of cough throughout the day to be more important than the number of individual coughs?
9. Does coughing at night while sleeping versus coughing during the day have different importance to you? If so, please elaborate.
10. Do you consider the ability to control your coughing a feature of less severe cough? If so, please elaborate.
11. Over what time period are you able to recall your cough severity (ex. over the last day, week, 2 weeks, month)?
12. Do your family members mention that you cough more often than you think you do? If so, please elaborate.
13. Is there anything further you would like to tell us that would help us to characterize or understand cough severity?