

Free independent abstract service

This service is provided to the IPCRG as a grant from Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd. The IPCRG is represented in the editorial process by its team of Research leads who monitor and review the selection, summarising process and regional applicability.

2010 © Published by B. Ami Medical Information Ltd.

The service should not be considered as a recommendation for treatment. The abstracts printed here contain only a general description of the main ideas embedded in the original publication. Comments are welcome. Please send any comments to the Project Manager, Lynn Danzig at lynnndanzig@theipcr.org

Long-acting beta agonists and asthma outcomes

[de Vries F et al. *Eur Respir J.* 2010 Mar 29. \[Epub ahead of print\]](#)

The present study compared long-acting beta2-agonists (LABA), short-acting beta2-agonists (SABA) and inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) by analyzing asthma outcomes and risk of death in each group. Patients (n=507,966) were recruited from the UK General Practice Research Database and included an overall of 5 million SABA, 4.0 million ICS and 1.3 million LABA prescriptions. The authors report that worsening of asthma outcomes directly correlated with treatment intensiveness. In keeping with this, the relative rates (RR) of outcomes were found to be elevated in recent starters and heavy long-term users with LABA, SABA and ICS. However, the study points out that LABA exposure is not necessarily associated with an increased mortality rate among asthma patients.

Nutrition, allergies and respiratory illnesses in children

[Birch EE et al. *J Pediatr.* 2010 Jun;156\(6\):902-6. 906.e1. Epub 2010 Mar 15.](#)

Could early nutrition affect the occurrence of allergies and respiratory illnesses? Children up to 3 years old who received docosahexaenoic acid and arachidonic acid supplementation during infancy were compared with controls for asthma, wheezing, upper respiratory infection (URI), bronchiolitis, bronchitis, allergic rhinitis and conjunctivitis, otitis, sinusitis, atopic dermatitis and urticaria. First episodes of URI, wheezing/asthma and allergies tended to occur earlier among children in the control group. On the other hand, children who received the supplements were less likely to develop URI, asthma, atopic dermatitis

or any allergy. Thus, such supplements could be beneficial in the prevention of various pediatric illnesses.

The allergy-asthma connection

[Craig TJ. *Allergy Asthma Proc.* 2010 Mar;31\(2\):96-102.](#)

This electronic data-based analysis evaluated the prevalence of allergen sensitization, reflected by positive skin tests, and atopic disease in patients with asthma. Based on the published literature, the prevalence of underlying allergic morbidity in mild to moderate asthma was found to reach 95%. Interestingly, severe asthma was less associated with allergy. High IgE and exhaled nitric oxide (eNO) as well as highly positive metacholine test directly correlated with hypersensitivity. In parallel, late-onset asthma, female gender, nasal polyps and severe asthma were likely to be associated with non-allergic aetiology. Finally, the authors note that avoidance, omalizumab as well as allergen immunotherapy, when safely used, may be effective to treat asthma of all severities and ages.

Communication between primary physician and specialist

[Foy R et al. *Ann Intern Med.* 2010 Feb 16;152\(4\):247-58.](#)

This meta-analysis asked whether interactive exchange between primary care physician and specialist physician improves outcomes in patients with diabetes, psychiatric disorders or cancer. The study was based on 11 randomized and 7 non-randomized mental-health studies, 5 non-randomized diabetes studies. Clinically important effects were consistently found in these studies but interactive exchange is invariably accompanied by additional interventions that make it difficult to evaluate the value of interactive exchange alone.

Aerobic training in asthma

[Mendes FA et al. *Chest.* 2010 Apr 2. \[Epub ahead of print\]](#)

Uncontrolled asthma is accompanied by impaired quality of life and increased anxiety and depression. This randomized study evaluates whether aerobic exercise improves health-related quality of life (HRQoL) and reduces psychological stress and asthma symptoms in patients with moderate to severe asthma. Patients received either an educational program + breathing exercises alone (n=51) or in addition to aerobic training (n=50) twice weekly for 3 months. Scores for HRQoL, number of symptom-free days and measures of anxiety and depression were all significantly improved only in patients in the aerobic training group.

Sharp decrease in response to medical surveys

[Hazell ML et al. *Prim Care Respir J.* 2009 Sep;18\(3\):165-70.](#)

This cross-sectional study aimed to evaluate factors influencing the response rate to postal questionnaire surveys. Five ECRHQ-based respiratory surveys, directed to adults registered in general practices in the UK, were sent by post, with two reminders at 4-week intervals. The findings of the study point at a constant decreasing response rate (from 71.2% to 46.9%) between 1993-2004 particularly among the young, males and smokers. The authors suggest that this trend may reflect a growing unwillingness to disclose personal medical information among patients. Importantly, the response rate was increased by 18% (2004) and 23% (2001) by the use of two reminders. Understanding the underlying incentives of late/non-response might contribute to a better planning and evaluation of medical surveys.