

A lay summary of "The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on severe asthma care in Europe - will care change for good?"

Our cross-sectional European-wide study focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the quality of care for patients with severe asthma in Europe. To evaluate the influence of the pandemic on asthma control, patients' perceptions and physicians' perspectives online SurveyMonkey based questionnaires were developed in an iterative manner by the authors, involving severe asthma experts, psychologists and patients. Data were collected from 1101 patients and 268 physicians from 16 countries between 30 November 2020 and 9 May 2021. We investigated not only the nature of the changes in asthma care, but also how patients perceived those changes. The patient survey consisted of multiple-choice questions including demographics, medication use, changes in care and (biologic) treatments, patient satisfaction with any changes in care or treatments, and patient perceptions of any change in asthma control induced by the changes in care or treatments. The physician survey contained assessment about the reorganisation of severe asthma care and treatments, the challenges they faced during the reorganisation of care and their perspectives on which of these changes may be implemented in the future. The results showed that major changes have taken place, the most important of which were the transition to remote consultation and home administration of biologics. The vast majority of severe asthma patients were satisfied with these changes and there was no evidence of loss of asthma control. Physicians expected these changes in care to persist in the future. Although severe asthma specialists reported numerous challenges in reorganisation of severe asthma care, this reorganisation was achieved with high levels of patient satisfaction. Video/phone consultations and home-administered biologics worked well for both physicians and most patients. Telemedicine may have a valuable potential to improve access to high-quality care for these patients in these countries.

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