

A Lay summary of "What bothers severe asthma patients most? A paired patient-clinician study across Europe"

Severe asthma is a complex, multi-dimensional disease. Therefore, management of severe asthma should be equally multi-faceted, including appropriate medication and non-pharmacological therapies such as physiotherapy, supported self-management and psychological support. The best asthma treatment involves shared decision-making, rooted in mutual understanding between patient and clinician. This study used a novel, patient-centred approach to examine the most bothersome aspects of severe asthma to patients, as seen from both perspectives in asthma registries.

Across seven countries, 126 patients from seven severe asthma clinics in seven European countries completed an open-ended survey about the most bothersome aspect(s) of their asthma. Patients' responses were linked with their treating clinician who also completed free-text surveys about each patient. We compared patient and clinician responses, and then checked asthma registries across Europe to see how well they captured information related to patient answers.

Clinicians accurately identified a most bothersome symptom for just 29% of patients. Clinicians were more focused on direct physical symptoms and were less focused on 'holistic' aspects such as the effort required to self-manage their disease. Agreement was particularly low in younger patients and those who's asthma required oral steroids less often. In asthma registries, patient aspects were rarely reflected in clinical measures and were predominantly represented in self-report patient questionnaires.

These results highlight different perspectives and priorities between patients and clinicians, with clinicians more focused on physical aspects. These differences must be considered when treating individual patients, and within multi-disciplinary treatment teams. The use of questionnaires that include multi-faceted aspects of disease may result in improved asthma research and clinical practice.

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