

A study of asthma control among patients attending medical clinic, Teaching Hospital Jaffna

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Background: Asthma affects a large number of patients in Sri Lanka. Even though asthma can be well-controlled with adequate medication, various factors influence the level of asthma control among patients. This study aimed to estimate the level of asthma control among patients attending medical clinics in Teaching Hospital Jaffna.

Methods: This was a descriptive cross sectional study. Patients aged ≥ 18 years, having a documented diagnosis of asthma for >3 months and attending medical clinics at Teaching Hospital Jaffna participated in the study. Systematic random sampling was used to select participants. Asthma control status was assessed using the Asthma Control Test (ACT) and classified as well-controlled (ACT score ≥ 20), partially-controlled (ACT score 15 to 19) and poorly-controlled (ACT < 15). Data was analyzed using SPSS 21.

Results: A total of 233 asthma participated in the study. Asthma was well-controlled in 42.5%, partially-controlled in 40.8% and poorly-controlled in 16.7% of the sample. Half of the population had no interference in daily activities by asthmatic attacks during the 4 weeks prior to data collection, while a very small proportion (1.3%) reported they were affected by asthma all the time. Only 2.1% of participants had more than one episode of shortness of breath per day during the 4 weeks prior to data collection while 45.1% had such episodes once or twice a week. Nearly half of the population did not have sleep disturbances in the 4 weeks prior to data collection. One third of the population had used a rescue inhaler once or fewer times per week, and equal proportions (23%) had used a rescue inhaler 1-2 times per day and 2-3 times per week during the 4 weeks prior to data collection. More than 70% of the sample rated their level of asthma control as moderately-controlled to well-controlled.

Conclusion: This indicates that asthma is often not well-controlled among asthma patients. Identifying risk factors and managing them is essential to achieving good control.

Keywords: Asthma control, asthma control test (ACT), Jaffna