

## Medicines prescribed for patients with chronic asthma followed up at Teaching Hospital Jaffna

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**Introduction** The recently updated Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) treatment guidelines recommend prescribing inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) as the first-line treatment for patients with chronic asthma, even for those with infrequent symptoms.

**Objective** To describe the medicines prescribed for patients with chronic asthma at Teaching Hospital-Jaffna (THJ).

**Methods** This is part of a larger study which recruited a pragmatic cohort of patients with chronic asthma followed up at THJ. Chronic asthma was defined as patients having symptoms such as wheeze, shortness of breath, chest tightness and cough that vary over the time. Data were collected from 1200 adult patients fulfilling the case definition of chronic asthma from December 2019 to June 2020 using a pre-tested interviewer-administered questionnaire. Medicines prescribed for these patients were compared with the recommendations given in the 2020 version of GINA treatment guidelines. Descriptive statistics were used to present the results. Ethical and administrative approvals were obtained before data collection.

**Results** Mean age of the cohort was 61.9 years (range 18, 88; SD±12.05) with a female to male ratio of about 3:1. All but two (99.8%) participants were on ICS; of them, 76.3% was on monotherapy with ICS whereas 23.7% was on ICS with long acting beta2 agonists. Co-prescription with inhaled salbutamol was observed in the majority (98.9%). In addition to ICS, theophylline had been prescribed for 27 (2.2%) and monteleukast for 5 (0.4%). None were on oral corticosteroids for maintenance therapy. The majority (84.3%) were on medium dose ICS followed by 14.7% and 0.9% on high and low doses, respectively.

**Conclusion** Almost all patients in the cohort were on ICS which was in line with the 2020 GINA guidelines. However, benefits of such ideal prescribing need to be judged by evaluating control of asthma in these patients.