

05.02 - Monitoring airway disease

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Protocol to identify potential severe asthma in UK primary care

Severe asthma, Adults, Primary care

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Background: The International Severe Asthma Registry (ISAR) defines severe asthma as those on GINA step 5 or uncontrolled on step 4. These patients should be referred to specialist providers. But, severity may be mis-estimated in primary care and/or unrecognized (ie never referred to specialist care).

Aim: To identify potential severe asthma patients in UK primary care.

Methods: A historical cohort study was conducted using the Optimum Patient Care Research Database. Eligible patients had an active diagnosis of asthma (pre 2014), were ≥ 16 yrs old, and had ≥ 1 asthma medication within the past year. Patients were categorized according to GINA step and number exacerbations/yr. % of patients on GINA step 4 or 5 with no recorded specialist referral was also assessed.

Results: 207,695 patients were included. 2.3% of GINA step 1 patients had ≥ 2 exacerbations/yr, rising to 3.2%, 5.0%, 12.8%, and 40.9% of those on GINA steps 2, 3, 4 and 5, respectively (Figure). 89.8% of patients at GINA step 5 or uncontrolled on step 4 had no specialist contact recorded in their last year of available data.

Conclusion: The prevalence of severe asthma may be higher than previously estimated. Treatment resistant asthma due to other factors (e.g. adherence, technique, co-morbidities) cannot be discounted. Further analyses using detailed referral information will be undertaken and outcomes for unrecognized severe asthma patients in UK primary care compared with ISAR data.

