

EMBARGOED: NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE THURSDAY 12 JUNE 2014, 14:01 BST

Burden of asthma revealed in newly published Mundipharma research

Respiratory experts call for a renewed focus on how asthma control is determined and discussed in consultations

- Over 80% of respondents who had experienced acute exacerbations in the previous year regarded their asthma as controlled¹
- 24% of asthma patients had visited an emergency department and 12% had been hospitalised in the last year¹
- 33% of respondents said asthma stops them living their life to the full²

Cambridge, UK, 12 June 2014 – Data from the Mundipharma sponsored REALISE™ survey, published today in the Nature Partner Journal entitled *npj Primary Care Respiratory Medicine*, highlight a high incidence of recent exacerbations, even among patients whose asthma is currently controlled according to clinical guidelines.¹ Worryingly, many patients continue to cope with their symptoms rather than consider these as indicators of a continuing problem that should be addressed.¹ With approximately 1 in 25 people across Europe affected by asthma^{3,4} and around 15,000 people dying due to the condition each year,⁵ respiratory experts highlight the published findings as a reality check and encourage healthcare professionals to renew their focus on standardised assessment of asthma symptoms and lifestyle limitations.

The **RE**cognise **A**sthma and **L**ink to **S**ymptoms and **E**xperience (REALISE™) survey provides the largest pan-European data on incidence of exacerbations and symptoms, levels of GINA-defined control (Global Initiative for Asthma), as well as insights into patient attitudes.¹ The survey highlights that 45% of respondents had uncontrolled and 35% partially controlled asthma according to the GINA criteria, although more than two thirds of patients did not recognise this and did not consider their asthma as serious.¹

According to REALISE™, many patients accept the lifestyle limitations their asthma brings without considering their symptoms as an important health issue that could be better managed and prevented.¹ Almost half (44%) of respondents reported having used oral steroids for asthma in the previous 12 months, with over 40% having used their reliever three or more times in the previous week.¹ The findings also show that 56% of those respondents who thought their asthma was controlled continued to experience symptoms that interfered with normal activities,¹ with 53% waking at night due to asthma in the week prior to the survey.¹

Professor David Price, University of Aberdeen, and lead author of the REALISE™ publication explains: *“Asthma remains a major problem and our research comes as a reality check. Even those patients considered controlled continue to be at risk of exacerbations. We need to refocus on what matters: accurately assessing asthma in clinical practice and improving patients’ understanding of what effective disease management means for their day-to-day life.”*

He continues: *“We have an armoury of clinical guidelines, treatments and resources at hand, and when combined with a clear understanding of what makes our patients tick, we can produce much better outcomes for all involved.”*

The REALISE™ findings highlight a disconnect between patients’ perceptions of control and guideline-defined control,¹ suggesting a need for healthcare professionals to better understand individual patient attitudes towards asthma to build a shared language that supports effective disease management. 82% of all REALISE™ respondents said they do not want to be labelled as sick,¹ 62% believe they are not like other people with asthma¹ and 43% ignore their asthma to feel normal and fit in.¹ These findings are further supported by patients’ attitudes towards their inhaler, with two out of five respondents considering it a nuisance and 26% reporting to feel embarrassed about using it.¹ Overall, 33% of all REALISE™ respondents preferred managing their asthma themselves rather than seeking their doctor's advice,² with 33% using the internet and social media for information about managing their condition.²

Monica Fletcher, Chair of the European Lung Foundation, Chief Executive of Education for Health and co-author to the REALISE™ publication, adds: *“Patients have normalised their asthma so we need to dig deeper in consultations. Our research signposts that understanding patients’ attitudes towards asthma is a key component of successful asthma management. We know there is a disconnect between how patients think about control and the pre-defined level of symptom control that healthcare professionals are aiming for. We need to close this gap to curb the impact of the disease.”*

The REALISE™ survey was sponsored by Mundipharma, who is committed to collaborating with the asthma community to discover new perspectives on asthma management with the goal of improving the lives of people with the condition.

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Notes to editors:

About REALISE™

The REALISE™, REcognise Asthma and LInk to Symptoms and Experiences, survey, sponsored by Mundipharma and developed in partnership with asthma experts, is a large pan-European survey of asthma patients which aimed to assess patient attitudes and behaviours towards their disease. The survey was conducted in 8,000 people with asthma aged 18-50 across 11 European countries between July and October 2012. In order to take part in the survey, respondents must have received at least two prescriptions for their asthma in the past two years and also had to be active on social media. Further details about the survey can be found in the accompanying REALISE™ survey backgrounder.

About asthma

Asthma is a chronic (long-term) inflammatory disorder of the airways which leads to recurrent episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness and coughing. Asthma is a serious public health issue affecting an estimated 30 million children and adults under 45 years of age across Europe.⁶ Patients with poorly managed asthma are at an increased risk of exacerbations, hospitalisation and death. Poorly managed asthma can also have a huge impact on a person's quality of life and day-to-day activities.

About Mundipharma

The Mundipharma network of independent associated companies consists of privately owned companies and joint ventures covering the world's pharmaceutical markets. These companies are committed to bringing to patients the benefits of pioneering treatment options in the core therapy areas of oncology, pain, respiratory and rheumatoid arthritis. For further information please visit: www.mundipharma.com.

Supporting collateral

For supporting materials please visit www.newsmarket.com/mundipharma

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References

¹ Price, D., Fletcher, M., van der Molen, T. Asthma control and management in 8,000 European patients: the REcognise Asthma and LInk to Symptoms and Experience (REALISE) survey. *npj Primary Care Respiratory Medicine* 2014

² Mundipharma International Limited data on file: REALISE™ - European Asthma Patient Survey Results, 2012

³ European Federation of Allergy and Airway Diseases Patient Association. The Severe Asthma Survey: Severe Asthma Backgrounder. Website accessed April 2014: <http://www.efanet.org/wp-content/documents/SASSevereAsthmaBackgrounder050307.pdf>

⁴ United Nations Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision Highlights*. Website accessed April 2014: http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2008/wpp2008_text_tables.pdf

⁵ Asthma UK. News: Asthma experts form new partnership to halve European asthma deaths. Website accessed April 2014: <http://www.asthma.org.uk/News/asthma-experts-form-new-partnership-to-halve-european-asthma-deaths>

⁶ European Respiratory Society. *The European White Lung Book: The First Comprehensive Survey in Respiratory Health in Europe* 2003