

Abstract 13530

Results of a Pulmonologist Survey Regarding Attitudes and Practices with Inhalation Devices for COPD

Type: Late Breaking Abstract

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Abstract Body

Background:

For COPD patients there are well-established protocols for step-up care as the disease progresses. Inhalational medications have been preferred and clinicians have a number of methods of delivery to choose from, including small volume nebulizers. Currently, there are no guidelines on when to use these delivery devices and what patient types would benefit to achieve the best clinical outcomes. We sought to determine physicians' knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding the treatment of COPD with particular attention to the use of small volume nebulizers.

Methods:

An online survey was designed by a steering committee including ATS clinicians and scientists and conducted by Harris Poll between January 7 and January 29, 2016. More than 6,200 pulmonologists and fellows from around the world were solicited via email from the ATS membership roster as well as from attendees of the ATS 2015 conference, and a total of 205 pulmonologists and fellows in the U.S. completed the survey. The robust sample size (n>100) supported quantitative analysis.

Results:

83% of respondents reported interest in receiving additional education on COPD treatment devices, and 84% agree they would like to learn about different types of nebulizers. 98% reported they are at least somewhat knowledgeable about treatment devices, while 54% reported they are extremely/very knowledgeable. Seven in ten (70%) reported they typically discuss how to use a device during patients' first visit. Only 9% discuss how to clean and store devices and 20% feel extremely/very knowledgeable about how to clean and maintain a hand-held nebulizer to prevent infections. 31% are extremely/very knowledgeable about which patients should use a hand-held nebulizer. 56% feel that hand-held (small volume) nebulizers are essential for some patients. For patients with more severe COPD, as measured by an mMRC grade of 4, 63% believe hand-held nebulizers are more effective than DPI/MDI. 70% stated that hand-held nebulizers are more effective than DPI/MDI in the management of acute exacerbations.

Conclusions:

Our findings suggest that U.S. pulmonologists and fellows are interested in expanding their understanding of nebulizers in the management of COPD. Although most typically discuss device use during a patient's first visit, storage and cleaning are discussed by few. While the majority (66%) are at least knowledgeable about which COPD patients should be prescribed hand-held nebulizers, 84% would like to learn about different types of nebulizers. The survey findings suggest that greater education and consensus are required to guide clinicians regarding optimal device selection.

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