

Assessment of Asthma Control Level in Primary Care Setting in Malaysia: ASCOPE

Introduction

The goal of asthma management is to achieve overall control including current asthma control and risk reduction. Asthma control among patients is often overestimated, while symptoms are underestimated, leading to increased morbidity and mortality. As the first point of contact during symptom presentation, primary healthcare plays a crucial role in asthma management and control.

Objectives

Primary Objective

To assess, in real-life clinical practice in Malaysia, the level of asthma control and the potential risk factors for uncontrolled disease in asthma patients treated at government health clinics.

Secondary Objectives

- To review the medications given to Asthma patients compared to guideline recommendations
- To review the current practices of symptom control assessment
- To assess the adherence level in patients with inhalers (using Malaysian Medical Adherence Scale (MALMAS))

Methodology

Prospective, observational multicenter study, with data collection based on medical records and interviews with patients on current pharmacotherapy. The level of asthma control was based on GINA Control Questionnaire and Asthma Control Test (ACT). Compliance to treatment was assessed using the Malaysian Medication Adherence Scale (MALMAS).

Results

- Among the 1011 patients recruited, 416 (41.1%) were well controlled, 388 (38.4%) were partly controlled and 207 (20.5%) were uncontrolled asthma, as per GINA guidelines.
- 81.5% of all patients were diagnosed with mild asthma (mild-intermittent or mild-persistent).
- Among mild asthma patients, well controlled asthma stands at only 49.6%.
- Compliance was found to be a risk factor in poor outcomes for asthma patients – among the 207 patients with uncontrolled asthma, 60% of them had poor adherence to medication.

Conclusions

Only 41% of patients seen in primary care had good control of asthma. Low adherence to treatment contributes to poor health outcomes in patients with asthma. More effort is needed to improve asthma control among asthmatics, including those in the mild group.