

ASSESSMENT OF ASTHMA CONTROL LEVEL (ASCORE) AT 2 TERTIARY CARE CENTERS IN MALAYSIA

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Introduction: The prevalence of asthma in Malaysia is estimated to be 6.3% (more than 2 million patients), which imposes a significant burden on patients, their families, and the community. Despite the availability of Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) guideline on asthma management, which is widely referred by healthcare providers in Malaysia, the control of asthma is still a critical challenge.

Objective: To assess the level of GINA-defined asthma control and the potential risk factors for uncontrolled disease in patients with asthma, in real-life clinical practice in Malaysia.

Methodology: This was a retrospective, observational study involving outpatients with GINA-defined clinical diagnosis of asthma, seen and treated by physicians at the two tertiary care centers in Malaysia, from January to August 2016. Patient demographics, GINA-defined levels of asthma control, Asthma Control Test (ACT) scores, and medications for preventive therapy were documented.

Results: Of the 398 patients, only 46.7% of the patients had GINA-defined well-controlled asthma, while 38.7% and 14.1% patients had partially controlled and uncontrolled asthma, respectively. Cough (79.9%) was the most commonly reported symptom. Based on ACT scoring criteria, more than half of the patients (63.8%) were categorized to have well-controlled asthma, while 14.8% of patients had very poorly controlled asthma. Inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) (94%) and short-acting β -agonist (93.7%) were the most frequently used treatment for asthma control. Allergen exposure (33.2%), uncontrolled asthma symptoms (24.9%), poor adherence (19.3%), low FEV₁ (<60% predicted) (13.6%), and incorrect inhaler technique (11.1%) were some of the risk factors for poor asthma control as assessed by physicians

Conclusion: The majority of the patients did not have GINA-defined controlled asthma. Furthermore, there is a need to change patients' perception that high SABA usage helps in keeping their asthma under control as suggested by the findings.