Living with Asthma: Patient Perceptions & Understanding

Survey Findings

The following findings are based on a survey conducted via an online research panel in May 2012 amongst 1,011 Australian men and women aged between 18-45 years who have been diagnosed with asthma by a doctor. The survey was conducted with a geographically representative sample.

Gender and age breakdown
- Male 40%, Female 60%
- 18–24 (16%), 25–29 (21%), 30–34 (22%), 35–44 (41%)

KEY FINDINGS:
- While 88% described their asthma as average or lower severity, six out of ten felt their asthma go ‘out of control’ at least once every six months
- More than a quarter (26%) had experienced an asthma attack in the last month with 87% experiencing symptoms in the past 12 months
- Almost all (95%) of adults said their asthma was under control
- Only a third (36%) were aware that poorly controlled asthma and repeated attacks has the potential to cause permanent changes to the lungs
- Less than half (47%) believe asthma is a chronic condition requiring ongoing treatment
- Adults more likely to take vitamin supplements than use preventative medication (42% vs. 25%)

Most adults believe their asthma is less severe than average and under control
- 59% thought their asthma was less severe than average
- 29% thought their asthma severity was average
- 9% thought their asthma was more severe than average
- 95% said their asthma was under control

The frequency of reported symptoms and reliever medication use suggest asthma is not as well controlled as many patients may believe
- 26% have had an asthma attack in the last month
- 56% have had an asthma attack in the past 12 months
- 59% said their asthma gets out of control at least once every six months
- 25% said their asthma gets out of control at least once a month
- 43% used their reliever medication at least a few times per week

The majority have experienced asthma symptoms in the last 12 months
- 88% have experience symptoms in the last 12 months

* NB: The final sample was found to have a skew towards females (80%) which was higher than the estimated skew within the natural asthma 18-45 population (60%; Asthma in Australia AIH; 2011). All data were therefore weighted to adjust for this gender skew and all figures included in this summary are weighted figures.
• 60% had felt short of breath due to cold weather
• 60% had felt short of breath during an everyday activity
• 42% had woken up at night or earlier than usual
• 20% had not been able to get as much done at work/school/home
• 10% had missed time off school, university or work
• 7% had visited a hospital or emergency department

In an attempt to reduce asthma attacks, many patients make lifestyle adjustments
• 71% said they take active steps to reduce asthma attacks
• 53% reduced their use of cleaning products
• 30% chose not to keep a pet
• 24% reduced their exercise
• 17% minimised going out, socializing or holidays

Despite being prescribed preventer medication, many adults don't use it as often as recommended
• 55% of those who had been prescribed a preventer but did not use it as often as recommended, did so because they believed their asthma was not serious enough to warrant it
• 32% of those who had been prescribed a preventer but did not use it as often as recommended, did so because they believed their asthma was sufficiently controlled with a reliever puffer

Many adults use their reliever medication to prevent symptoms, as well as to manage symptoms
• 78% used their reliever medication when they felt their asthma worsening
• 38% used their reliever medication when they had allergies/hayfever
• 25% used their reliever medication when the temperature was cold
• 24% used their reliever medication before they exercised

Knowledge about the importance of long-term asthma management is low
• 53% did not believe asthma was a chronic condition requiring ongoing treatment
• 64% did not believe poorly controlled asthma and repeated attacks had the potential to cause permanent changes to the lungs

Adults are more likely to engage in everyday activities rather than take a preventer daily
• 68% check Facebook daily
• 52% apply moisturizer daily
• 42% take vitamins/nutrient supplements daily
• 29% apply make-up daily
• 25% use a preventer daily

--ENDS--

The survey was conducted for GlaxoSmithKline by Hall & Partners | Open Mind and released with endorsement from National Asthma Council Australia and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

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