Asthma Patients’ and Physicians’ Perspectives on the Burden and Management of Asthma (APPaRENT)

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INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

- The 2020 GINA report\(^1\) recommends a stepwise approach to asthma management, including as-needed ICS/formoterol irrespective of GINA step classification and as MART from GINA Step 3, broadening the indication for as-needed ICS/formoterol to include a wider spectrum of patients with asthma.
- The APPaRENT study aims to understand patient and physician attitudes to regular versus MART dosing, and assess global relevance of GINA\(^1\) recommendations in developed and developing nations.

METHODS

Multinational, cross-sectional online survey of patients and physicians between July and August 2020* 

**Included countries:**
- Australia
- Canada
- China
- Philippines

Patients ≥18 years of age with self-reported history of a past/current physician-diagnosed asthma

- 13,203–23,024 patients invited
- 300–308 surveys completed

Physicians with ≥3 years in clinical practice and responsible for care of ≥4 patients with asthma monthly

- 1131–3117 physicians invited
- 200–202 surveys completed

* Patients and physicians were sampled and recruited from high-quality, non-probability panels; † general practice, family medicine, and/or internal medicine physicians. Canada also included respirologists/respiratory therapists.

Sources:
Most patients were female, whilst mean age varied between countries.

- Proportion of smokers/vapers in the household was generally high, particularly in China and the Philippines.
- The majority of physicians were male in all countries except for the Philippines.
- Most common treatment setting varied by country.
Physicians classed most of their patients as having mild or moderate asthma

*Physician question: Approximately what percent of your asthma patients have mild asthma (GINA Step 1 and 2)/moderate asthma (GINA Step 3 and 4)/severe asthma (GINA Step 5)?

For all data reported here, *P*-values (determined by ANOVA test) indicated significant variation between countries (*P*<0.05). *n=* number of patients who responded to the question.

ANOVA, analysis of variance; GINA, Global Initiative for Asthma

Most patients (66–81%) reported using regular maintenance therapy with or without as-needed reliever therapy, of whom only 8–15% were using MART.
Despite 55–75% of physicians reporting awareness of MART dosing, the majority reported prescribing a SABA alongside MART at least some of the time.

*Physician question: are you aware of the MART dosing approach for asthma?; †physician question: when you prescribe ICS/LABA as MART for asthma, how often do you also prescribe a short-acting β₂-agonist or a short-acting bronchodilator as a reliever?

For all data reported here, P-values (determined by Chi-square test) indicated significant variation between countries (P<0.05). n=number of patients who responded to the question.

MART, maintenance and reliever therapy; SABA, short-acting β₂-agonist.


Only ~20–50% of patients were aware of the MART dosing approach.
Physicians and patients both considered symptom control to be very important

Physicians generally rated symptom control over exacerbation reduction as their main treatment goal for patients at GINA Steps 1–2 (29.3–45.1% vs 9.3–15.4%) and GINA Steps 3–4 (24.2–43.6% vs 20.9–30.2%)*

Physicians also prioritized symptom severity (29.4–44.1%) over exacerbation risk (18.0–29.2%) when prescribing daily maintenance medication†

Across all countries, approximately 50–90% of patients indicated that it was ‘very important’ that their inhaler treats symptoms such as chest tightness, coughing, and shortness of breath‡

*Physician question: What are the goals that you aim to attain in your patients with mild asthma (GINA Steps 1 and 2)/moderate asthma (GINA steps 3 and 4)?; †physician question: What is THE MOST important factor to you when prescribing controller/maintenance medications?; ‡patient question: How important is it that your inhaler treats chest tightness/shortness of breath/coughing?

GINA, Global Initiative for Asthma
Conclusions

- Most patients used regular maintenance therapy with or without as-needed reliever therapy, in line with global recommendations.
- There appears to be limited understanding and implementation of MART, based on the low proportion of patients reporting MART use and the high proportion of physicians prescribing SABA alongside MART dosing.
- Most physicians and patients considered symptom relief to be very important.
- Taken together, our results suggest that practical strategies are required to implement GINA recommendations effectively in real-world clinical practice.
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