

Health Awareness

New Survey Reveals Insights To Successful Asthma Management

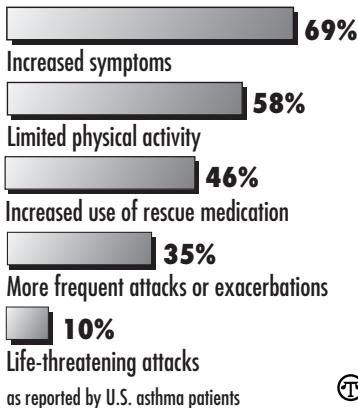
(NAPSA)—A new survey, the Global Asthma Physician and Patient (GAPP) Survey, offers new insights into asthma management by examining disconnects between asthma patients and physicians. This chronic disease, which affects more than 20 million Americans, causes inflammation and narrowing of the airways, making it difficult to breathe. In fact, asthma ranks within the top 10 conditions causing limitation of activity, and costs our nation \$16.1 billion annually.

The GAPP Survey, the first survey to ask patients and physicians similar questions, found that 40 percent of adult patients in the U.S. are unaware mild asthma can be fatal, yet 64 percent categorize their asthma as mild.

Uncontrolled asthma symptoms decrease quality of life and increase health care spending. Patients who do not take their asthma medications as instructed reported increased symptoms (69 percent), limited physical activity (58 percent), more physician visits (25 percent), more hospitalizations or emergency room visits (13 percent), and absences from work (10 percent).

The GAPP Survey found that several key barriers exist preventing good asthma management. For example, patients and physicians have different perceptions about in-office education. More than one-third (38 percent) of patients estimate that no office time is spent on education, while

The Consequences Of Not Taking Asthma Medication



Research shows that two out of five patients don't know that asthma attacks can be fatal in patients with asthma. Also, there is evidence that not taking asthma medication as instructed decreases quality of life.

nearly all (98 percent) physicians report that some time is devoted to this topic. Patients also report never discussing short-term medication side effects (43 percent), such as fungal infections in the mouth, sore throat or hoarseness. When these discussions do occur, nearly two-thirds of patients report having to initiate the conversation themselves.

Awareness of potential side effects is vital to treatment compliance. Patients reported that because of side effects they consider skipping or actually skip taking their medication. Recognizing side effects allows patients to

work with their doctor and make necessary treatment adjustments or changes to reduce these side effects.

More than three-quarters (76 percent) of patients state that they would welcome new asthma treatment options. Most (81 percent) physicians agree there are still unmet needs in asthma treatment.

Eliminate the GAPPs in Your Asthma Management

If you have asthma, experts offer these tips:

- Educate yourself about asthma and treatments through discussions with your doctor and patient organizations.
- Never be afraid to begin discussions with your doctor and always ask about benefits/risks associated with your medication(s).
- Understand and recognize medication side effects and regularly discuss them with your doctor.
- Keep a symptoms diary and bring it to every office visit to help both you and your doctor to properly adjust your treatment plan.
- Take your medication as instructed. Not doing so can negatively impact your daily life.
- Discuss treatment options with your physician to find the most appropriate medications.
- Visit www.gappsurvey.org for more information and resources.

The GAPP Survey Advisory Board is comprised of members from the World Allergy Organization and the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology and was underwritten by a grant from ALTANA Pharma.