

Editorial
Respiratory Diseases



Korean COPD Patients Can Get Satisfaction

OPEN ACCESS

Received: Nov 13, 2022

Accepted: Nov 15, 2022

Published online: Nov 18, 2022

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Disclosure

The author has no potential conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Inhaled medications are key components of COPD treatment. However, nonadherence and device error are huge barriers to inhaler use especially in patients with COPD. Compared with asthma, COPD patients tend to be older and have many comorbidities including cognitive impairment.¹ In a study that investigated inhaler device handling in elderly, the proportion of acceptable use was only 49.4%.² Analysis of Korean national health insurance data revealed that adherence was 34.7% even in high-grade COPD patients.³ Previous studies suggest that adherence is associated with patients' satisfaction with inhaler.⁴

Although patients' satisfaction is very important, there has been no study in Korean patients with COPD. Also, most of the studies outside of Korea were performed in patients with asthma. Recently, Jang and colleagues⁵ assessed inhaler satisfaction and determinants of high satisfaction in Korean COPD patients. The authors objectively compared the satisfaction according to different devices. In multivariable analysis, modified Medical Research Council score < 2 and good adherence were independently associated with high satisfaction.

This study is valuable because it was conducted by investigators independent of pharmaceutical companies. Previous similar studies were predominantly led by pharmaceutical companies and there were potential conflicts of interests. Also, this is a real-world study and the researchers utilized an objective measurement tool for the satisfaction of inhalers. Moreover, there have been few studies of inhaler satisfaction in Korea.

There are some limitations in this study. The authors classified pressurized metered dose inhalers (pMDIs) as one device. However, there are different types of pMDIs. For example, the way of indicating the remaining dose is different between pMDIs. Also, the adherence was measured simply by self-reported single questionnaire. However, despite these limitations, this study provides valuable information regarding inhaler satisfaction in Korean COPD patients.

It is of utmost importance to educate patients how to use inhalers for COPD. Repeated education can improve the skill.² The usefulness and necessity of inhaled medication in COPD treatment also should be taught. Through these efforts, Korean COPD patients can get satisfaction.

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