



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Efficacy evaluation of educational sessions for patients with asthma and COPD[☆]

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KEYWORDS

Asthma;
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Abstract

Introduction: Asthma and COPD are respiratory diseases in which a better knowledge and understanding of the pathology allows the patients to be more involved, which is crucial in their treatment. Holding educational sessions is a good way of imparting information to the patients.

Aim: To determine the efficacy of educational sessions in helping patients with asthma and COPD to acquire a better understanding of their condition.

Methods: Following a Portuguese Lung Foundation initiative to improve knowledge about respiratory health, educational sessions for patients suffering from asthma or COPD were organized. 25 randomized patients with each disease were invited to participate. Each session lasted 60 min. Patient knowledge was tested by means of a multiple choice questionnaire before and after the session.

Results: Fifteen patients with asthma attended the sessions; they had an average age of 36 years, of which 60% were female. Within the group 60% were able to name their pathology correctly. Seventeen patients with COPD attended the sessions; they had an average age of 69 years, of which 70% were males and only 3 (17.6%) patients were able to correctly name their pathology. In both groups, there was a statistically positive improvement ($p < 0.05$) of correct answers to the questionnaire at the end of each educational session.

Conclusion: Patient knowledge increased in each educational session. Patients with COPD were less well informed about their disease than patients with asthma and they also had more difficulty in correctly naming their disease.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Asma;
DPOC;
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Avaliação de eficácia de sessões de educação a doentes com asma e DPOC**Resumo**

Introdução: Asma e DPOC são patologias respiratórias em que o envolvimento e conhecimento dos doentes é determinante no tratamento. Uma forma de esclarecimento e informação é a realização de sessões de educação para doentes.

Objetivo: Avaliar a eficácia de sessões de educação para doentes com Asma e DPOC na aquisição de conhecimentos.

Métodos: A propósito da uma iniciativa da Fundação Portuguesa do Pulmão, com o intuito de promover o conhecimento sobre a saúde respiratória, foram realizadas sessões de educação para doentes com diagnóstico de Asma e DPOC.

Foram selecionados aleatoriamente 25 doentes cada um dos diagnósticos referidos e convidados a participar. Cada sessão teve a duração de 60 minutos. O conhecimento foi avaliado utilizando um questionário de escolha múltipla realizado antes e depois de cada sessão.

Resultados: Participaram 15 doentes com asma, com média de idade de 36 anos, sendo 9 (60%) do sexo feminino; 60% dos doentes sabiam nomear corretamente a sua patologia. Dos doentes com DPOC participaram 17, com média de idade de 69 anos, 12 (70%) eram do sexo masculino e apenas 3 doentes nomearam corretamente a sua patologia respiratória. Em ambos os grupos verificou-se melhoria estatisticamente significativa ($p < 0,05$), das respostas corretas ao questionário após cada sessão de educação.

Conclusão: Verificou-se um aumento de conhecimento dos doentes em ambas as sessões de educação. Os doentes com DPOC parecem ter menor informação sobre a sua doença e têm maior dificuldade em denominá-la.

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Introduction

Asthma and COPD are respiratory diseases with high incidence in the general population and a tendency to increase is forecasted.^{1,2} Both diseases are associated with high work and/or scholastic absenteeism³⁻⁶ and both have a strong impact on health expenses^{7,8}; they are also associated with bad health habits which could be avoided, hence the efforts being made to control these diseases more effectively.^{1,2,7}

Several studies have demonstrated that patient education reduces hospital admissions, the number of medical appointments and labor absenteeism and also improves quality of life.⁹⁻¹¹ Other studies demonstrated that benefits in lung function^{12,13} and adherence to treatment¹⁴ are more obvious in asthma patients and that the cost/benefits confirm the advantage of educating both patients with asthma and COPD.^{10,11}

Patient education is currently recommended in several clinical guidelines.^{1,2,15} Diverse forms of patient education are presented in different studies⁹⁻¹⁴ but given the consistency of the results we may consider "access to information" as the determining factor. There is considerable variation in the number, regularity and type of educational sessions, number of participants (individual/group) and the characteristics of the educators (doctors/nurses).

In the present study the authors aim to evaluate the efficacy of a 60-min educational session given by a pulmonologist for patients with asthma and COPD, by measuring the variation in correct answers given before and after each session to a questionnaire.

Methods

The "Semana do Pulmão" initiative was organized by the Portuguese Lung Foundation to improve respiratory health knowledge in the population in general and for those suffering from respiratory pathologies in particular. There were subsequently a number of initiatives in partnership with the Unidade de Saúde Familiar Nova Via (ACES Espinho/Gaia) in the North of Portugal in October 2010.

Twenty-five randomized patients with each of above mentioned diseases were selected from the health care unit database and invited to participate in educational sessions. The patients had been diagnosed and followed by their General Practitioners, according to clinical guidelines.^{1,2}

There was an educational session for asthma patients and another for COPD patients. Each session lasted 60 min. Before and after attending a session, each patient completed an electronic anonymous multiple choice questionnaire with 4 or 5 options and 60s time limit per question (Fig. 1) and a demographic questionnaire.

Visual support was used in both educational sessions, and definition, prevalence, risk factors, clinical characteristics and treatment were briefly described. Afterwards, there was a demonstration of inhalation techniques using several devices; at this point the patients were invited to ask questions and clarify any remaining doubts.

The demographic characteristics, smoking habits, severity of disease and the length of time since diagnosis were evaluated for each patient. The patients' ability to correctly name their own disease was also analyzed.

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