

Parental Perceptions and Practices toward Childhood Asthma

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Abstract : Introduction: Parental perceptions and practices are important for improving the asthma outcomes in children; indeed, evidence shows that parents of asthmatic children harbor considerable misperceptions of the disease. Objective: To identify the prevalence of asthma and to investigate the perceptions and practices of parents toward asthma and its management in Saudi children. Methods: A two-stage cross-sectional survey of 2000 parents of children aged 3-15 years from schools located in all five districts of Riyadh province located in central Saudi Arabia, was conducted. Data collection was accomplished using a self-administered questionnaire based on information obtained from the literature. Results: Of 1450 children whose parents participated in the study, 600 had asthma, dyspnea, or chest allergy. The overall number of children with parental reports of ever having been diagnosed with asthma was 478 (32.9%). The majority of parents (321, 53.5%) believed that asthma was a hereditary disease. Of these parents, 361 (60.3%) were concerned about side effects of inhaled steroids, and 192 (32%) about development of dependency on asthma medications. Three hundred sixty seven (61.2%) parents reported that they could treat the asthma attack at home and almost 76% of parents went to pediatric emergency department during asthma attack. Conclusions: In this study, the overall prevalence of children whose parents reported that they were diagnosed with asthma was high (32.9%). Furthermore, parents of children with asthma had misperceptions regarding asthma and exhibited ineffective practices in its management. To improve asthma care and compliance, adequate education should be provided to parents.

Keywords : asthma, management, parents, quality of life

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