

Patient perspectives of inhaler technique checks in England

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Context

Inhaler technique checks (ITCs) are key in enabling patients with lung conditions to benefit from their medication, reducing the risk of exacerbations and improving symptoms.

We wanted to understand how many people with a lung condition were receiving inhaler technique checks and the impact these checks have from a patient perspective.

Method

We conducted a survey from April to June 2021, promoted via Asthma and Lung UK and healthcare professionals.

1,042 people from England with a lung condition who used an inhaler responded.

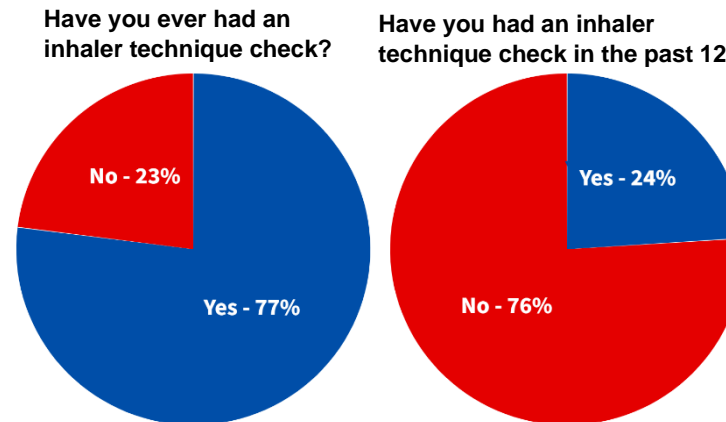
Respondents could report multiple conditions.

69% (n=723) had asthma, 33% (n=339) had COPD, 9% (n=93) reported diagnoses of both asthma and COPD and 229 reported other conditions such as bronchiectasis and lung cancer.

Results

23% (n=233) reported they had never had, or do not remember ever having an ITC. Those from the most deprived third of areas were 1.5 times more likely to state this compared to the least third deprived of areas.

Of those that knew when their latest ITC was (n=988), 76% stated they had not had an ITC in the previous 12 months.



Of those who remembered what happened at their last ITC, either remotely or face to face (n=664), 81% received verbal advice and 56% had technique demonstrated.



Of those responding on the helpfulness of the check (n=642), almost 9 out of 10 (88%) said it was at least somewhat helpful.

67% (n=454) reported a positive impact such as confidence, understanding or reduced exacerbations, and 41% (n=295) used their inhaler differently due to the check, and had not gone back to the way they were using it before.

20% (n=134) reported not liking the checks due to embarrassment, feeling tested or being told how to use their inhaler.

Conclusions

- The majority of respondents had not had a check within the last year, and almost a quarter could not remember ever having one.
- For those that did have an inhaler technique check, most reported that they were helpful.
- As these checks benefit patients, steps must be taken to ensure that more patients have regular inhaler technique checks, and that these are approached in a non-judgemental fashion.
- Community pharmacies could be commissioned and supported to provide inhaler technique checks with a funded community pharmacy inhaler technique check and coaching service.