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Title: Subutilization of COPD guidelines in Mexico

Prof. Dr Rafael 4859 Laniado-Laborin rlaniado@uabc.edu.mx MD ¹, Prof. Dr Adrian 4860 Rendon adrianrendon@hotmail.com MD ², Dr. Juan Manuel 4861 Alcantar-Schramm juan_manuel_8@hotmail.com MD ¹, Dr. Rebeca 4862 Cazares-Adame rebecacazares@gmail.com MD ¹ and Prof. Dr Otto 4863 Bauerle obauerle@yahoo.com MD ³. ¹ Facultad de Medicina, Universidad Autonoma de Baja California, Tijuana, Mexico ; ² Facultad de Medicina, Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon, Monterrey, Mexico and ³ Departamento de Neumologia, Centro Medico Las Americas, Merida, Mexico .

Body: A recent large COPD survey in Mexico pointed out several facts that suggest a lack of knowledge of the most usual recommendations for diagnosis and COPD treatment. Those included clinical diagnosis without spirometry confirmation, lack of awareness in spite of the presence of risk factors and symptoms and undertreatment of GOLD III and IV patients. Our aim with this study was to explore the degree of knowledge on COPD guidelines During a national continuous medical education program on COPD for general practitioners (GP), and before any conference, a 10-item questionnaire was applied to explore the degree of knowledge on COPD guidelines. Ten Mexican cities were included and 999 GP participated. 72.5% of them said that they had read a COPD guideline and 59.4% answered that they used one in their practice. When asked which guideline(s) they used, we had 86 different responses with GOLD (34.1%) being the most common, followed by GINA (12.8%), Seguro Social (7.7%) and the CAT questionnaire (3.8%). Reasons for not using any guideline included: never read them (41.8%) followed by lack of access to them (18.2%), not enough time to read them (6.0%) and because they are too long (4.6%). When asked about suggestions to draft a better guideline we got 98 different answers; a chapter on treatment was the most common answer (42.8%), followed by chapter on diagnosis (28.7%) and a chapter on COPD symptoms (27.3%). Basically all the suggested topics are already included in the current international guidelines. COPD guidelines are not widely used by GP in Mexico. Guidelines length, lack of access and physicians work overload are the main barriers to use them. It also seems that those who read them do not fully understand their content and purpose.