

European Respiratory Society Annual Congress 2013

Abstract Number: 5363

Publication Number: P3692

Abstract Group: 1.2. Rehabilitation and Chronic Care

Keyword 1: COPD - management **Keyword 2:** Exercise **Keyword 3:** Rehabilitation

Title: Six minute walk test inter-rater reproducibility in COPD patients: Cross-sectional study

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Body: Introduction: Six minute walk test (6MWT) is an important tool in the evaluation of functional capacity and prognostic in COPD patients. However, especially in long term follow-up, this test could be executed by different evaluators and it isn't well-know if 6MWT has an acceptable inter-rater reproducibility. Aims: This study analyzed 6MWT intra and inter-rater reproducibility in COPD patients. Methods: In this study, 31 patients with clinical and spirometrical diagnosis of COPD were enrolled to participate. They performed three 6MWT (American Thoracic Society, AJRCCM 2002; 116: 111–7), the first and second were executed by the same evaluator with a 30min interval, and the last by a different evaluator a week later. Exercise capacity was determinate using the walking distance. Intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC), Bland-Altman plots were used. Results: Intra and inter-rater relative reproducibility was excellent (ICC>0,8). Limits of agreement (Figura 1) were higher than the minimal important clinical difference (35m) in both intra and inter-rater analysis.

Figure 1: Reproducibility A: Intra-rater; B: Inter-rater. 6MWT: Six minute walk test. In spite of the excellent relative reproducibility, the high bias reaffirms the need of a practice test, and the caution in a comparison of tests done by two different evaluators. Conclusions: 6MWT don't have an acceptable inter-rater reproducibility, due to its high bias.