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Title: Asthma control is reached in a large majority of asthmatics treated with omalizumab. An Italian observational study

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Body: Background: Few data are available on the proportion of asthmatics achieving a good asthma control during omalizumab treatment (OT). Aim: To assess the level of control (according GINA guidelines) achieved in a group of asthmatics on OT, characterize what influences the lack of control and correlate the level of control with the treatment duration. Method and Results: We studied 281 asthmatics on OT from a median of 32 months (range 4-96). 70.1% of patients showed a good or partial control of asthma (37.5% of these showed a well control). Comparison between poorly controlled (PC) and partially or well controlled asthmatics showed a significant higher prevalence in the first group of comorbidities [obesity: 33.8% vs 17.9%, gastro-oesophageal reflux (GERD): 47.9% vs 33.5%, aspirin intolerance: 32.9% vs 16.1%] and a lower post-BD FEV1 (70.9±19.9 vs 81.1±18.3 % of pred, p<0.001). Similarly, asthmatics with at least one exacerbation in the last year showed a significant higher prevalence of comorbidities [obesity :29.2% vs 16.3%, chronic rhinosinusitis: 43.5% vs 25.3% and nasal polyps: 34.5% vs 18.8%, GERD: 45.5% vs 31.3%] and a lower post-BD FEV1 (74.1±22.3% vs 81.6±16.3% of pred, p=0.01) than patients without exacerbations. Subdividing patients into quartiles of the duration of OT, the percentage of PC asthmatics remained similar in all groups (from 31.3% to 24.2%). Conclusions: OT allows a high percentage of asthmatics to obtain a well or partial control of asthma, even after several months of therapy. Among patients who remain with PC asthma or continue to have exacerbations, there is a higher prevalence of comorbidities which are probably not optimally treated.