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Title: Acute exacerbations of asthma in Barcelona, the recent experience

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Body: Introduction: Asthma is a chronic respiratory disease which involves investment of lots of human and economic resources. In spite of the development of new treatments asthma exacerbations (AE) are increasing. Objective: to analyze the clinical features of the asthmatic exacerbations attended in the emergency care unit (ECU) in Barcelona during 2005 and 2011. Patients and Methods: all the asthmatic exacerbations attended in the Vall d'Hebron University Hospital since January until December of 2005 and 2011 were identified in patients between 16 and 70 years old. The diagnosis of asthma was accepted if clinical features agreed with those established by the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA). Results: 219 and 220 AE were identified respectively in 2005 and 2011. In 2005 149/219(68%) corresponded to female and in 2011 149/220 (68%). In 2005 62/219 (30%) were current smokers while in 2011 61/220 (28%). In 2005 in 104/219 (47%) a nasal catarrh of slow beginning was registered; in 2011 in 107/220 (49%). In 2005 40% of the patients were being treated with inhaled corticosteroids as basal treatment, while in 2011 the 50%. In 2005 the 44% of patients were receiving short acting beta agonist in the moment of discharge while in 2011 the 81%. In 2005 the AE were mild in 65/219 (41%), moderate in 68/219 (44%) and severe in 72/220 (33%). In 2011 120/220 (55%) of AE were mild, 72/220 (33%) were moderate and 24/219 (15%) were severe. Conclusions: the majority of AE corresponded to female and most of the AE were appearing in context of nasal catarrh of slow beginning. In recent years we observe a great increase of use of inhaled corticosteroids and short acting beta agonist. Asthma is still an infra treated disease.