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Title: Clinical and socioeconomic profile of asthmatic patients treated in a tertiary/university hospital in Brazil

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Body: Introduction: Bronchial asthma has a high prevalence, morbidity, and impact on quality of life worldwide. Its associated costs are still unknown in Brazil. Objective: The aim is to describe clinical and socio-economic characteristics of asthmatic patients in treatment in specialized units at a public university hospital in Brazil as part of a cohort study on costs of asthma treatment. Methods: It's a cohort study of patients above 6 years of age with persistent asthma, which were interviewed 2 times with 6 months interval using a standardized instrument to collect data. Results: 117 asthmatics were enrolled (72.6% of female gender). Average age was 44.3 years (SD=20.7) and average mensal family income was US\$ 766.50 (SD=616.54). The average duration of asthma was 23.2 years (SD=17.5) and 103 patients (88 %) has had associated rhinitis. 59 patients (50.4%) had mild, 42 (36%) had moderate and 16 (13.6%) had severe asthma and 43.6% of all patients had their asthma well controlled, 37.6% were partially controlled and 18.8% were not controlled. All patients were using daily medication to control asthma. Only 30.7% had money expenditures for allergen avoidance measures. Conclusions: We discovered a low income profile among patients. Due to the low level of organization of Brazilian Health System a great proportion of mild asthmatics are treating their disease in a tertiary hospital. Although all patients are using some control medication, almost 1/5 of them were not controlled. Rhinitis is a frequent co-morbidity probably influencing the severity and control of disease. A low proportion of patients are using immunotherapy and making allergen avoidance measures.