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Title: Newly developed simple QoL questionnaire in early detection of COPD in a population of smokers at risk for COPD development

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Body: Aim: Assessing the role of a simple newly developed QoL questionnaire (MARKOQ) in early detection of COPD in a population at risk for COPD. Methods: MARKOQ is a self-administered questionnaire with 18 questions. Subjects were smokers with ≥ 20 pack-years, both gender, 40-65 yrs of age, with no diagnosis of COPD. They were referred to a pulmonologist (history, physical, lung function) for diagnosis of COPD and the staging. MARKOQ was administered twice: at primary care clinic and 2-4 weeks later at a pulmonology clinic. Results: Sample included 219 consecutive subjects (48.5% male), mean (SD) age 52.6 (6.9) yrs with 38.0 (17.4) pack-years. 25.3% were diagnosed as COPD (stage I 18%, stage II 6.7%, stage III 0.6%). Psychometric analyses showed very good internal consistency of MARKOQ (Cronbach's alpha=0.89) and test-retest reliability (r=0.84). The correlation with CAT scores was r=0.54. MARKOQ significantly discriminated (F=4.20, p=0.013) patients with GOLD stage II or higher (mean=19.9, SD=8.7) from those in stage I (mean=12.9, SD=10.1) and "healthy" smokers (mean=12.9, SD=8.4) (CAT scores were not discriminative). Correlations of MARKOQ scores were only significant for FEV1%, (r=-0.22, p=0.003). Conclusions: Our results indicate that the MARKOQ developed for an early detection of COPD may be able to detect early changes in QoL complementary to lung function impairment. The exact validity of the MARKOQ will be known after the reevaluation based on the cohort follow-up. Supported by an unrestricted grant by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK eTrack number CRT114338).