

European Respiratory Society Annual Congress 2013

Abstract Number: 2641

Publication Number: P2090

Abstract Group: 6.3. Tobacco, Smoking Control and Health Education

Keyword 1: Lung function testing **Keyword 2:** Primary care **Keyword 3:** COPD - diagnosis

Title: Smoking and obstructive lung function disorders in three rural districts in Northwest Russia

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Body: Background: Obstructive lung diseases remain one of the major public health problems in Russia taking account of a high prevalence of smoking (31.9% of the adult population). The airflow limitation is not necessarily accompanied by certain symptoms and therefore some patients do not always seek for medical advice. Therefore, there is a consensus about the underestimation of the prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and a definite need for early screening on primary care level. Aim: Early detection of airflow limitation and identification of risk factors for COPD among smoking patients in general practice in Northwest Russia. Methods: Cross-sectional study. Criteria for inclusion: patients with cough as a main symptom and/or with smoking history, age 35 or older, from three rural districts of Arkhangelsk region. Lung function screening was established by COPD-6 with criteria of obstructive disorder as FEV1/FEV6 less 0.7. Results: Screening procedure was made by nurses. Totally 861 patients were included in the study (52.6% of the sample was males). Mean age was 50.4 years. 60.5% of the subjects were current smokers, 13.5% - ex-smokers. The average smoking history was 26.2 years with 19.3 cigarettes per day. Main symptoms were cough with/without sputum and dyspnoe (41.2% and 40.5%, correspondently). 15.4% patients did not have any symptoms. FEV1/FEV6 less 0.7 were identified in 14% of subjects, 48.7% of them did not have any symptoms. Totally 28.2% patients were motivated to stop smoking. Conclusion: Further investigation and intervention such as lung function testing with spirometry and training health personnel dedicated smoking cessation programs are needed.