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**Title:** Asthma medication use in the general population of West Sweden

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**Body:** Background: Many studies focus on the use of asthma medication in clinical cohorts of asthmatics, but very few study the use of asthma medication in the general population. The aim of the study was to identify patterns of asthma medication use in a general adult population. Methods: From a randomly selected population, aged 16-75 years, who participated in a postal survey on respiratory symptoms, a random sample of 2000 was selected for clinical examinations and interview, including questions on asthma medication use. In total 1172 participated. Results: Physician-diagnosed asthma (asthma) was reported by 11% and physician-diagnosed COPD (COPD) by 2%. Recurrent wheeze was reported by 9%, attacks of shortness of breath by 8% and chronic productive cough by 7%. Asthma medication was used by 11% of the population. The most common asthma medication was short-acting beta-2 agonists (SABA) which was used by 8%. A majority of SABA users, 63%, also used inhaled corticosteroids (ICS). Most users of SABA used their medication occasionally, but 17% of subjects only using SABA used it most days. ICS was used by 4% and an additional 4% used a combination treatment with ICS and LABA. Of users of combination treatment, 71% used their medication on most days, compared with 58% among users of ICS. Asthma medication was used by 71% of subjects with asthma, 92% of subjects who had visited an asthma specialist and 68% of subjects reporting COPD. ICS was used by 55% of subjects with asthma and 53% of subjects reporting COPD. Conclusion: Use of asthma medication is common. Half of the asthmatic subjects in a general population used ICS. One fifth of subjects who only use SABA used them most days and could probably benefit from use of ICS.