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Title: Prevalence of the chronic obstructive pulmonary disease among smokers attending primary health care facilities in Georgia

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Body: Background. The prevalence of COPD in Georgia is suspected to be high due to high smoking rate, but the real data is unknown. The aim of the study was to assess the prevalence of COPD among smokers more than 40 years of age attending primary healthcare (PHC) facilities in Georgia. Methods. The World Health Organization proposed questionnaire were filled in patients who visited for any reasons PHC in 10 districts of Georgia. The patients were placed into one of four diagnostic categories (mild, moderate, severe, very severe stage). Results. Out of 4275 patients 2268 (53.5%) were current and past-smokers, among them 2054 male (90.5%) and 214 female (9.5%). Out of those 2268 patients 360 subjects were eligible for data analysis (with chronic dyspnea, cough, and sputum production). 351 patients performed spirometry and 9 patients were excluded because of poor spirometry maneuvers. Of the 351 patients 92 (26.2%) showed airflow limitation. Most of the subjects (42 patients, 45.6%) had moderate disease (stage II). Thirty patients (32.6%) had an FEV1 less than 50% predicted (stage III); The stage I of COPD were stated in 13 subjects (14.1%). Seven cases (7.6%) of very severe COPD (stage IV) were diagnosed. Airflow limitation was significantly related to male gender and cumulative pack-years. Conclusion: It was shown that there are potentially a number of COPD cases that are undiagnosed by GP's in Georgia. Use of spirometry as a routine test for smoker patients will help in early detection and correct diagnosis of COPD, which subsequently will help in implementation of preventive measures.