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Title: Use of medicines and prevalence of co-morbid diseases in subjects with and without COPD in Sweden

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Body: Background Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is one of the most common diseases with substantial morbidity and mortality. Aim To analyse the use of medicines due to respiratory and co-morbid diseases and to analyse the prevalence of co-morbid diseases in a cohort of subjects with and without COPD in Sweden. Methods A cohort of subjects was identified in earlier clinical examinations of the general population of Northern Sweden within the Obstructive Lung Disease in Northern Sweden (OLIN) Studies. The cohort consisted initially of 993 subjects fulfilling criteria for COPD and an age- and gender matched control sample of same size without obstructive lung function impairment. Since 2005, these subjects have been invited to yearly interviews and examinations. This analysis is based on resource use data collected in 2006 (COPD: n=772, 78% of the initial cohort, and non-COPD: n=802, 81%). Results The use of respiratory medicines increased with severity grade of COPD (mild 30%, moderate 52% and severe + very severe 85%). The same trend was seen for medicines due to co-morbid diseases. The proportion of subjects that used medicines for at least one other disease was higher among subjects with COPD compared to non-COPD subjects, 78% vs. 73%, p=0.05. The prevalence of co-morbid diseases was high among subjects with COPD. However, the only disease that was statistically more common among subjects with COPD compared to non-COPD subjects was depression (p=0.001). Conclusions The use of medicines due to co-morbid diseases was higher among subjects with COPD. These results indicate that not only respiratory conditions but also co-morbid diseases contribute to high societal costs for COPD.