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Title: Inhaler competence and patient satisfaction with a DPI; results of two real-life studies in asthma and COPD

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Body: Background. Asthma and COPD patients included in controlled clinical trials are usually well trained in their use of the inhaler. Inability to use inhalers correctly is an important reason for poor disease control. Real-life studies are necessary for estimation of every day inhaler competence and patient satisfaction. Aim. To study the use of a dry powder inhaler (Easyhaler®, Orion Pharma, Espoo, Finland) in real-life situations. Material and methods. We performed two open multicentre trials with Easyhaler in 1017 patients with asthma or COPD: A) a 3-month study in adults (age ≥18 years; n=799) with twice-daily inhalations of formoterol, and B) a 1-year study in children (3-11 years old; n=138) and adolescents (12-17 years old; n=80) with salbutamol Easyhaler used as-needed. All types of patients prescribed a long-acting (study A) or a short-acting β_2 -agonist (study B) were included. No exclusion criteria except study drug hypersensitivity were applied. Physicians assessed the patients' ability to learn how to use the inhaler correctly. Patients filled in questionnaires and reported their experiences with the device. Results. Of the physicians (n=52), 87% found Easyhaler easy to teach with repeat instructions necessary in only 26 % of the cases. Nearly all patients (98%) found Easyhaler easy to learn, and were satisfied or very satisfied with the device (52% and 43%, respectively). No significant differences in patient-reported experiences were seen between age groups or between asthma and COPD patients. Conclusion. Easyhaler was found easy to teach by the majority of physicians. Most patients found Easyhaler easy to use and their satisfaction with the device was high.