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Received: June 27 2014 | Accepted: July 01 2014

Conflict of interest: Disclosures can be found alongside the online version of this article at erj.ersjournals.com

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Eur Respir J 2014; 44: 1098–1099 | DOI: 10.1183/09031936.00118014 | Copyright ©ERS 2014

Manuscript cited in “Specific inhalation challenge in the diagnosis of occupational asthma: consensus statement”

To the Editor:

On page 1579 of the manuscript entitled “Specific inhalation challenge in the diagnosis of occupational asthma: consensus statement”, a consensus statement published in the June 2014 issue of the *European Respiratory Journal*, it is stated: “...the duration of exposure should preferably be increased from one day to the next with, for instance, a cumulative exposure limited to <30 min on the first challenge day,” after which reference numbers 11, 13 and 57 are cited [1].

I am the co-author of reference 11 and in this text we say, in table 2 (page 234), to limit exposure to 1 min on the first day, 5 min on the second day and 30 min on the third day [2].

So, our reference was wrongly quoted. Exposing subjects for 30 min on the first day can lead to severe reactions, which can explain the relatively high frequency of such reactions as referred to in the paper referenced as 57 [3].

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Received: June 04 2014 | Accepted: June 12 2014

Conflict of interest: None declared.

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Eur Respir J 2014; 44: 1099–1100 | DOI: 10.1183/09031936.00102614 | Copyright ©ERS 2014

From the authors:

On behalf of our Task Force, I would apologise for “inappropriately” referencing the quoted article co-authored by Jean-Luc Malo, which was published in his highly renowned textbook *Asthma In the Workplace* [1]. Actually, we referred to this article because this expert investigator was the first to outline the need to gradually increase the exposure to low-molecular weight agents on consecutive days, mainly to avoid the occurrence of severe delayed asthmatic reactions. Nevertheless, the same sentence also refers to the recent paper by VANDENPLAS *et al.* [2] who reported a 3% incidence rate of severe asthmatic reactions recorded during 335 specific inhalation challenges with occupational agents. The result of this retrospective analysis showed that only one severe reaction was delayed and that more than half of the severe reactions developed within the first 30 min of exposure. These findings indicated that the cumulative duration of exposure to low-molecular weight agents could be safely limited to 15–30 min on the first challenge day rather than 1 min on the first day, 5 min on the second day and 30 min on the third day as initially proposed by Jean-Luc Malo.

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Received: June 12 2014 | Accepted: June 16 2014

Conflict of interest: None declared.

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Eur Respir J 2014; 44: 1100 | DOI: 10.1183/09031936.00107214 | Copyright ©ERS 2014