The burden of asthma, hay fever and eczema in adults in 17 countries: GAN Phase I study

Kevin Mortimer1,2, Maia Lesosky3,4, Luis García-Marcos5,6, M. Innes Asher7, Neil Pearce8, Eamon Ellwood9, Karen Bissell9, Asma El Sony10, Philippa Ellwood6,7, Guy B. Marks11, Antonela Martínez-Torres12,13, Eva Morales14, Virginia Perez-Fernandez15, Steven Robertson8, Charlotte E. Rutter8, Richard J. Silverwood6,16, David P. Strachan17, Chen-Yuan Chiang18,19,20 and the Global Asthma Network Phase I Study Group21

1Dept of Medicine, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK. 2Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Liverpool, UK. 3Dept of Clinical Sciences, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Liverpool, UK. 4School of Public Health and Family Medicine, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa. 5Paediatric Allergy and Pulmonology Units, Virgen de la Arrixaca University Children’s Hospital, University of Murcia and IMIB Bio-health Research Institute, Murcia, Spain. 6ARAqAL Allergy Network, Edificio Departamental-LAIB, Murcia, Spain. 7Dept of Paediatrics: Child and Youth Health, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand. 8Dept of Medical Statistics, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, UK. 9School of Population Health, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand. 10Epidemiological Laboratory (Epi-Lab) for Public Health, Research and Development, Khartoum, Sudan. 11Respiratory and Environmental Epidemiology, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. 12Paediatric Allergy and Pulmonology Units and Nurse Research Group, Virgen de la Arrixaca University Children’s Hospital, Murcia, Spain. 13IMIB Bio-health Research Institute, Edificio Departamental-LAIB, Murcia, Spain. 14Dept of Public Health Sciences, University of Murcia and IMIB Bio-health Research Institute, Edificio Departamental-LAIB, Murcia, Spain. 15Dept of Biostatistics, University of Murcia and IMIB Bio-health Research Institute, Edificio Departamental-LAIB, Murcia, Spain. 16Centre for Longitudinal Studies, UCL Social Research Institute, University College London, London, UK. 17Population Health Research Institute, St George’s, University of London, London, UK. 18International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, Paris, France. 19Division of Pulmonary Medicine, Dept of Internal Medicine, Wan Fang Hospital, Taipei Medical University, Taipei, Taiwan. 20Division of Pulmonary Medicine, Dept of Internal Medicine, School of Medicine, College of Medicine, Taipei Medical University, Taipei, Taiwan. 21Global Asthma Network Phase I Study Group members are listed at the end of the report.

Corresponding author: Chen-Yuan Chiang (cychiang@tmu.edu.tw)

Abstract

Aims Asthma, hay fever and eczema are three common chronic conditions. There have been no recent multi-country data on the burden of these three conditions in adults; the aims of this study are to fill this evidence gap.

Methods The Global Asthma Network Phase I is a multi-country cross-sectional population-based study using the same core methodology as the International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood Phase III. It provides data on the burden of asthma, hay fever and eczema in children and adolescents, and, for the first time, in their parents/guardians.

Results Data were available from 193,912 adults (104,061 female; mean±SD age 38±7.5 years) in 43 centres in 17 countries. The overall prevalence (range) of symptoms was 6.6% (0.9–32.7%) for current wheeze, 4.4% (0.9–29.0%) for asthma ever, 14.4% (2.8–45.7%) for hay fever ever and 9.9% (1.6–29.5%) for eczema ever. Centre prevalence varied considerably both between countries and within countries. There was a moderate correlation between hay fever ever and asthma ever, and between eczema ever and hay fever ever at the centre level. There were moderate to strong correlations between indicators of the burden of disease reported in adults and the two younger age groups.

Conclusion We found evidence for a substantial burden of asthma, hay fever ever and eczema ever in the countries examined, highlighting the major public health importance of these diseases. Prevention...
strategies and equitable access to effective and affordable treatments for these three conditions would help mitigate the avoidable morbidity they cause.