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Health Care Professionals and Inhaler Technique: Are They Ready to Educate Patients

Currently inhalation devices are the preferred method of delivering respiratory medication. Inhalation is the preferred method of drug delivery in asthma and other respiratory conditions (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) as therapy can be delivered directly to the lungs, the site of action, making it effective and systemic absorption of medication can be by-passed, making the use of medications safe¹.

Despite the obvious advantages of inhalation medication, problems with medication administration due to incorrect use of devices, is problematic. Over the last two decade, data on the use of respiratory devices indicates that depending on the device, somewhere between up to 90% of patients do not use their devices correctly²⁻⁵, hence compromising optimal benefits of medication use⁶⁻¹³.

Perhaps the high prevalence of incorrect device use is not surprising, given that published data also indicates that patients tend not to have their technique checked regularly, hence do not receive regular technique education^{4, 14}.

The reasons for this might be several however, it is reasonable to consider that the lack of ability of health care professionals to demonstrate correct technique could be associated with this practice in some way. Studies indicate that when comes to health care professionals; there are once again high proportions that are not able to demonstrate correct device technique^{15, 16}.

Identifying training for health care professionals which is effective and sustainable is important. This paper discussed a novel method of training pharmacists that results in sustained improvement in device technique.

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