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Understanding Asthma Care and Management Challenges in Pediatric Patients

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Title: Understanding Asthma Care and Management Challenges in Pediatric Patients

Background:

Asthma is a common pediatric health condition with highly variable manifestations. It may require daily management with medications and lifestyle adjustments throughout childhood. Due to the varied severity of the disease, effective management of asthma can place undue demands and challenges on asthmatic children and their families.

Objective:

To understand the challenges families face in managing their child's asthma.

Methods:

Currently ongoing since November 18, 2021, this study enrolls 5-11 years old presenting with an acute asthma exacerbation to the emergency room of a tertiary care children's hospital. We use structured questionnaires to collect information on asthma history, severity and management, and families' demographics. We also record families' responses to two qualitative questions on their needs and challenges in managing asthma, reported here using thematic analysis.

Results:

Of the 61 enrolled patients, 57 caregivers provided responses highlighting their needs and challenges. Six central themes emerged from content analysis of the qualitative transcripts: medication availability and management, environmental triggers, limiting activities, school policies, employment issues, and the emotional stress associated with caring for a child with asthma.

Conclusion:

Though the study was limited to patients in the emergency room, it provides insight into the different obstacles that patients and their families encounter. This interim analysis highlights an overwhelming need for improving modifiable challenges such as medication accessibility and school policies to lessen undue burden on families in caring for a child with asthma.

Key Words/Phrases: Asthma; Pediatrics; Challenges; Referrals; Children's Hospital; Emergency; Qualitative analysis; Asthma management