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A survey on lifestyle restrictions in children with asthma: A comparison with Quality of Life (QoL)

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Objectives: To describe the Quality of Life and the restrictions imposed by parents and caregivers of asthmatic children aged 7-15 years.

Methods: This comparative cross sectional study was conducted at outpatient clinics of two hospitals in Colombo. Children with physician diagnosed bronchial asthma, aged 7-15 years were recruited by systematic random sampling. The QoL was assessed using Mini Paediatric Asthma Quality of Life Questionnaire (MPAQoLQ). QoL was categorized as good (score=1.00-3.00) moderate (3.01-5.00) and poor (5.01-7.00).

Results: A total of 254 completed questionnaires were returned. The mean MPAQoLQ score was 4.9. Six (2.4%) had poor, 116(45.7%) had moderate and 132(52%) had good scores. There were significant restrictions to food items, such as cold/chilled food (n=202; 79.5%), eggs (n=159; 62.6%), fresh milk (n=159; 62.6%) and soya bean products (n=127; 50.0%). Furthermore physical activity (n=23; 9.1%) and playing with pets (n=197; 77.6%) were restricted. There was a statistically significant association between MPAQoLQ score and restrictions on cold/chilled food (p=0.000), soya bean products (p=0.001), physical activity (p=0.000) and bathing (p=0.001).

Conclusions: Quality of life of children with asthma is affected and it is in par with statistics of developed countries. However, dietary restrictions were highly prevalent (93.3%). These restrictions may be related to myths and beliefs in our society. Caregiver education on diet and lifestyle should be an integral part of out-patient management.