Age of Onset of Asthma Symptoms

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Abstract

Objective: Epidemiological studies have suggested that the majority of asthmatics have their onset of asthma early in childhood. However, there is little information in Chinese population. This study aims to address this question in a group of doctor-diagnosed asthmatic children in a regional hospital in Hong Kong. 

Method: This study was carried out in the Asthma Clinic of a regional hospital in Hong Kong during the period from April 2001 to December 2002. A designated nurse collected information about the age of onset of asthma symptoms from either the accompanying adults (usually the mother) or from the patient. Information on familial history of asthma and allergic illnesses was also collected.

Results: Data from 942 children were analysed. Six hundred and eight (64.5%) were boys and 334 (35.5%) were girls. The median age of onset of asthma was 3.0 year old, with the peak between 1 to 3 years old. Majority of children had their first symptoms before 6 years old. If there was a history of maternal asthma, there was a tendency for the children to present earlier.

Conclusion: We conclude that asthma symptoms in our patients start early in life.

Keyword: Age factors; Asthma; Child; Epidemiology