

exacerbations are poorly recorded suggesting COPD reviews are poorly conducted/documentated. This may lead to failure to increase maintenance regimens. Longitudinal assessment noted rapid increase in MRCD recording after this became remunerable under QOF. Exacerbation frequency recording should be incorporated into QOF. This dataset sets a baseline from which effectiveness of the National Clinical Strategy can be measured.

<sup>1</sup>The Patient Outcomes & Information Service (POINTS) is provided by GlaxoSmithKline as a service to medicine and is delivered on behalf of GlaxoSmithKline by Quintiles.

## S110 EMPLOYMENT HISTORIES OF PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA IN THE 1958 BIRTH COHORT

doi:10.1136/thx.2010.150946.11

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Reports suggest that people with asthma experience frequent job changes, perhaps to avoid working environments that worsen their asthma. The aim of this analysis is to compare the number of periods of unemployment and jobs from early to mid adult life in people with and without asthma. Due to the differing employment histories of men and women the analyses are presented stratified by sex.

**Methods** Participants from the 1958 birth cohort who provided a full occupational history and information on asthma at ages 16 and 42 (n=9856) were included. Employment was defined as a period spent in a job, in child/family care or in full-time education. Unemployment was defined as a period out of employment due to unemployment, sickness/disability or other unspecified reasons. Non-parametric methods were used to determine differences in (1) ever being unemployed (2) number of unemployment periods and (3) number of jobs (all to the age of 42 years) by asthma status (childhood asthma, adult onset asthma and the reporting of 'ever asthma' at age 42).

**Results** 45.8% of men and 39.5% of women had ever been unemployed by age 42. The median number of jobs by age 42 was 6 (range 1–23) and of unemployment periods was 0 (range 0–15).

1. In women, adult onset asthma and reporting 'ever asthma' at 42 were significantly associated with ever being unemployed (p=0.026, p<0.000 respectively), but no associations were seen in men.
2. Childhood asthma and reporting 'ever asthma' at 42 were not associated with the number of unemployment periods in either men or women. However, adult onset asthma was associated with increased number of unemployment periods in women (p=0.033), but not men.
3. Differences in number of jobs by asthma status are tabulated.

**Conclusions** In a cohort of adults born in 1958, women with adult onset asthma had an increased risk of experiencing unemployment, an increased number of unemployment periods and an increased number of jobs by age 42 years. In men, there was limited evidence that their asthma influenced their employment experience. It is not known whether these associations are seen in more recent cohorts.

Median number of:	n	Jobs MEN (IQR)	p Value (Mann–Whitney)	n	Jobs WOMEN (IQR)	p Value (Mann–Whitney)
Childhood asthma NO	2972	5 (3 to 7)	p=0.310	3436	6 (4 to 9)	p=0.513
Childhood asthma YES	487	5 (3 to 7)		352	6 (4 to 9)	
Adult onset asthma NO	3549	5 (3 to 7)	p=0.583	3852	6 (4 to 9)	p=0.005
Adult onset asthma YES	250	5 (3 to 8)		424	7 (4 to 9)	
Ever asthma by 42 NO	4248	5 (3 to 7)	p=0.029	4469	6 (4 to 9)	p<0.000
Ever asthma by 42 YES	480	5 (3 to 8)		623	7 (4 to 9)	

**Funding** This work was funded by Asthma UK, RG PhD funded by the COLT Foundation.

## S111 ASTHMA, PUBERTY AND BMI IN THE 1958 BRITISH BIRTH COHORT

doi:10.1136/thx.2010.150946.12

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Studies suggest asthma is associated with body mass index (BMI), pubertal development and hormonal status. We used data collected at ages 7, 11, 16 and 33 from the 1958 British Birth Cohort to explore the association of asthma with BMI and pubertal development. Wheeze was considered present at age 7, 11 or 16 if participant's mothers reported 'ever attacks of asthma or wheezy bronchitis' and, at age 33, if participants reported 'wheezing or whistling in the chest' in the last year. Age of menarche was reported at age 16. The association at each age of wheeze with BMI (<18.5, 18.5–25, 25+) and with age of menarche (<12, 13–14 years, 16+) was assessed in logistic regression models adjusted for parental asthma, father's social class, birth order and smoking (age 33 only). At age 7, 11 and 16, being overweight was associated with wheeze, an association that was stronger and more significant in girls than in boys. Wheeze at age 33 was associated with being overweight at age 33 in both men and women, but there was no consistent evidence that being overweight in childhood was associated with wheeze at the age of 33. Among 4524 girls with information 15.4% had reached menarche by age 12, and 2.2% had not reached menarche by age 16. The prevalence of being overweight at age 11 in the early and late menarche groups was 20.6% and 1.25% respectively, and the prevalence of being underweight at the age of 16 was 3.7% and 47.0%. Early menarche was associated with wheeze at age 11 (OR=1.57, 95% CI 1.19 to 2.09) even in 11-year-old girls with normal BMI. Late, but not early menarche was associated with wheeze at age 16 (OR=2.09, 95% CI 1.17 to 3.73). Neither early nor late menarche was associated with wheeze at age 33 years. At each follow-up of the 1958 birth cohort, wheeze was associated with being overweight in females. Although girls with early menarche were more overweight in childhood, and experienced more wheeze at age 11, there was no evidence that early menarche was associated with wheeze at the age of 33 years.

## S112 THE NATURAL HISTORY OF WHEEZE FROM BIRTH TO ADULT LIFE: A COHORT STUDY

doi:10.1136/thx.2010.150946.13

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**Introduction and objectives** Wheeze is a common symptom at all ages. Its natural history from birth to adulthood was studied in a birth cohort of individuals at high risk of atopic illness. The objective was to ascertain factors associated with wheeze at different ages, distinguishing between wheeze that occurred at successive time points (persistent wheeze) and wheeze newly occurring (incident wheeze).

**Methods** 497 infants were selected antenatally as having a first-degree relative with a history of asthma, hay fever or eczema. During their first year and at 7 years the children were examined, symptoms were recorded, skin prick tests performed and serum IgE measured. At 15 and 23 years further questionnaires were completed and (at 23) blood and skin tests performed.

**Results** Information was obtained on 483 individuals at 1 year, 453 at seven, 363 at 15 and 304 at 23. The prevalence of wheeze was fairly constant over time (around 30%), remission being balanced by incidence over each interval. Wheeze at 1 year predicted wheeze at ages seven and 15, and at seven it predicted wheeze at 15 and 23, but it was associated with different factors at different times and according to whether it was persistent or incident. In infancy it was related to non-atopic factors such as infection, maternal smoking and breastfeeding (protective). Persistent wheeze to age 15 was