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Identification of important respiratory research themes relevant to primary care: qualitative analysis of round 1 of the 2020 International Primary Care Respiratory Group (IPCRG) Research Prioritisation Exercise

Primary care

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An update of the International Primary Care Respiratory Group (IPCRG) Research Needs Statement is currently being undertaken using an e-Delphi method. The aim of this analysis is to identify the main respiratory research themes from the perspective of primary care practitioners worldwide.

Participants were recruited via the IPCRG network of 34 member countries. An initial open questionnaire elicited participants' views on the most important respiratory conditions seen in their daily practice and invited suggestions of 5-10 relevant research questions within these conditions in the following domains: diagnosis, management, monitoring, self-management and prognosis. Using thematic qualitative analysis we identified the main cross-cutting research themes.

112 participants (69% physicians, 10% nurses, 21% other, 64% had special interest in respiratory) from 27 countries responded with 608 suggested research questions. Asthma was reported as the most clinically important condition (25.7%) followed by COPD (24.5%) and URTI (5.8%).

Five themes emerged from the thematic analysis: uncertainties about diagnosis/management of respiratory conditions; need for contextually relevant and accessible guidance; need for methods to improve patient empowerment and self-management; role of the wider healthcare team; need for simple point-of-care tests.

The eDelphi method is successful in identifying relevant research questions and the main themes pertinent to primary care worldwide. These research questions now need to be prioritised for investigation by the international community.