

Factsheet 9

Updated on 11 June 2020

What makes a good asthma review during a pandemic?

This factsheet has been supplemented with a podcast.

“Every asthma consultation is an opportunity to review, reinforce and extend both the patient’s knowledge and skills.... It is important to recognise that education is a process and not a single event” (BTS/SIGN 2019).

How to undertake an effective review:

- Identify how you will deliver the remote review e.g. will it be through video consultation or telephone?
- Begin monitoring, briefly gather information from the medical record and prescribing data to assess morbidity and compliance, looking at SABA use and ICS/SABA ratio (for more information and resources on the ARC website [click here](#)).
- Start off with an introduction and establish if the patient has access to the internet as this will be useful to signpost them to educational resources and support, both during (where appropriate) and/or after the consultation.
- Check if the patient has a PAAP and more importantly how they use the PAAP. Inform the person you will be referring to this and discussing what they would like included in it during the conversation.
- Explore key triggers which make their asthma worse, including where appropriate smoking which is a key element.
- Check the person's understanding around the role of each medication in helping their asthma including dosing information and when they should be taking their medication. Remember to record these details on the PAAP.
- Ask about inhaler use and technique. Use videos to support your discussion where access is available and signpost people to resources such as the Asthma UK or the Rightbreathe website.

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- Use the RCP 3 questions or use the Asthma Control Test to monitor the person's asthma. The ACT can be sent to the person (or text a link to <https://www.asthma.com/>) beforehand so it can be discussed during the consultation. Do not forget to ask about flare ups, days off work or school and establish what this means for your patient in terms of impact on their lifestyle.
- Ask if there are any occupational or seasonal triggers which impact their asthma control, and whether avoidance or reduction of these is practicable or acceptable to the person.
- Assessment of control will naturally lead to a discussion with the patient about pharmacotherapy. You will need to consider stepping up or down of treatment as per BTS/SIGN (2019) and NICE (2020) guidelines.
- Signpost people to any additional psychosocial support where appropriate. You may use Asthma Factsheet 2 which contains useful links to provide mental health support. Discuss any follow up or review date(s) needed.
- Summarize the discussion at the end of the review and how they wish to use the PAAP. Check with the patient whether they would like their plan emailed, texted or posted to them. They may wish to use an app where they can add the Information to.
- Stress the importance of keeping it to hand preferably accessible on their phone.

Ryan et al 2013 proposed a universal structured approach to a primary care asthma review "SIMPLES". SIMPLES is an acronym for **S**moking, **I**nhaler technique, **M**onitoring, **P**harmacotherapy, **L**ifestyle, **E**ducation and **S**upport.

Why SIMPLES?

- It can be adapted to the current situation where face to face in person reviews may not be possible or even necessary for the majority of those with asthma. Allows an increased patient focused approach whilst gathering the required information for primary care records.

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For more Information on undertaking an effective consultation, watch out for our podcast titled "What makes a good asthma review?" which will provide you with further tips and hints around delivering an effective consultation remotely.

References:

BTS/SIGN (2019) SIGN 158: British guideline on the management of asthma. On:

<https://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/quality-improvement/guidelines/asthma/>

NICE (2017) Asthma: diagnosis, monitoring and chronic asthma management. On:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng80/resources/asthma-diagnosis-monitoring-andchronic-asthma-management-pdf-1837687975621>

NICE (2020) Asthma: diagnosis, monitoring and chronic asthma management

Evidence review A: increasing ICS treatment within supported self-management for children and young people On: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng80/evidence/a-increasing-icstreatment-within-supported-selfmanagement-for-children-and-young-people-pdf7079862638>

Ryan et al 2013 SIMPLES A Structured Primary Care Approach to Adults with Difficult Asthma. Prim Care Respir J. Sep;22(3):365-73. doi: 10.4104/pcrj.2013.00075