

## **SELF MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES OF OLDER PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA**

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**Purpose:** To obtain the perspectives of older people with asthma in order to understand the reasons for the higher risk of death from asthma in this group.

**Methods:** Combined qualitative and quantitative study of people over 50 years of age. Fifty five participants (16 male, 39 female) were recruited from inner city & suburban areas, predominantly surrounding a tertiary hospital, and the regional area of South Gippsland, an area with a high population of retirees. Participants were interviewed in-depth on their experiences, attitudes and beliefs about asthma. Lung function was measured pre and post beta 2 agonist use and questionnaire data on background information, asthma symptoms, asthma knowledge, asthma control, medication use and respiratory health was also collected.

**Results:** Findings from this study revealed barriers to the self-management of older people with asthma and in the provision of asthma care by health professionals. Education on asthma treatments and self-management strategies needs to be tailored in accordance with the age and time of asthma onset and the duration of diagnosis.

**Conclusions:** In order to improve asthma outcomes in older people we believe a specifically targeted intervention is needed to improve the content and quality of consultations for older people with asthma.

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