

Asthma has adverse effect on physical health in elderly

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(HealthDay) -- Older adults with asthma have decreased lung function, increased rates of allergic sensitization, and worse quality of life than healthy controls, according to a study published in the May issue of the *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology*.

Andrew M. Smith, M.D., from the University of Cincinnati, and colleagues assessed differences in characteristics between older patients with and without [asthma](#) and how these differences impact overall quality of life in a cohort of 77 patients (mean age, 68.7 years). Participants underwent a complete medical history, physical

examination, skin prick testing (SPT), spirometry, and exhaled nitric oxide measurements. The standardized Short Form-36 Version 2 (SF-36v2) was used to assess quality of life.

The researchers found that there was a significantly higher rate of SPT positivity in patients with asthma versus controls (88.9 versus 51.2 percent; $P = 0.007$). Compared with controls, participants in the asthma group had a lower mean percent predicted forced expiratory volume in one second at baseline (73.7 versus 89.6; $P = 0.007$). Compared with controls, the asthma group had worse general health, increased bodily pain, and worse overall physical health, as measured on the SF-36v2.

"Our results have identified significant effects of asthma on physical functioning in the elderly," the authors write. "Appropriate recognition of the disease and use of asthma medications by primary care physicians could improve outcomes, including reduction of hospital visits and improvement of general quality of life and health status."

More information: [doi:10.1016/j.anai.2012.02.022](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anai.2012.02.022)

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