

Profile of Children Attending Asthma Camps: Is Asthma Control Better In Children Who Previously Attended Camp Compared To Those Attending For The First Time?

M Welch, C Archibald, D Larson, and the Consortium on Children's Asthma Camps.

Rationale: 15,000 children attend over 150 asthma camps each year. If camp is making a positive impact, children who have been before (returnees) should have better asthma control than those attending for the first time.

Methods : The Consortium on Children's Asthma Camps compiled data from a common health history application used by 3 different camps in 2002 to characterize the type of child attending camp. Parents of 372 children, ages 7 - 14 (mean 10.5) completed an application about their child's medical history, functional status, and medication use.

Results: Only 30% used a PF meter regularly; nearly 70% had no asthma action plan. One-third used their rescue inhaler at least 4 days/week, 25% were awakening ≥ 3 nights/week, 85% had asthma interfering with their exercise ability, and almost 15% missed > 2 weeks/year of school. One out of 8 campers had been admitted for asthma ≥ 3 times in the last 5 years. Returnees comprised 46% of all campers. When returnees were compared to first time campers, all markers of sub-optimal asthma control (nighttime awakenings, school absenteeism, admissions, frequency of albuterol use, exercise limitation) were similar, except for a trend toward fewer ER visits ($p=.09$) in the returnees.

Conclusion: Asthma camp alone may not be adequate in making a significant difference in modifying asthma control in children.