

Should Inhaler Prescriptions Also Recommend Watching Videos Showing How to Use Inhaling Devices Properly?

Bruno Sposato, MD

To the Editor:

Incorrect inhaler techniques compromise optimal medication delivery. This can significantly influence poor outcomes and cause greater health economic burden.⁽¹⁾ Today, only 31% of patients correctly follow inhaler device techniques, whereas remaining patients perform acceptable (41%) or poor (31%) inhaler procedures.⁽²⁾ Therefore, it is vital for healthcare professionals to insist on educational programs aimed at improving patients' inhaling techniques. This can lead to both a better long-term disease control and quality of life.⁽³⁾

Often, physicians might not have time, skills, motivation, perception of the need, or resources to provide asthma/COPD education, particularly in primary care settings. Furthermore, several health professionals themselves do not know how to use inhalers correctly and cannot, therefore, coach patients effectively. Training patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals to prepare and use inhalers correctly is an essential component to attain reliable and repeatable medication deliveries.

The main methods of teaching proper inhaler techniques are two, namely, receiving direct instructions from healthcare professionals and reading package insert pamphlets. Another method, unfortunately almost never used, is watching videos showing inhaler techniques. The few studies in the literature agree that such videos are helpful.⁽⁴⁾ The said videos may support physicians to educate patients to use devices correctly.

Today, most people have a smartphone wherein they can download and watch such educational videos. Furthermore, we can easily find free videos clearly showing the various steps of a correct use of inhalers on YouTube. Therefore, prescriptions of such medications/devices should always include recommendations to watch related educational videos, supplying links, and texting or e-mailing them. Alternatively, patients could watch online videos demonstrating inhalers usage made by most pharmaceutical companies, which, unfortunately, are not, adequately advertised and consequently not easily available. In fact, these companies should put video links or QR codes on package insert pamphlets or directly on inhaler packaging (as Astra Zeneca has already done with Symbicort), so that patients/caregivers can easily connect and watch them on

their smartphones as often as necessary so learning how to use their inhalers properly.

In the digital age wherein everyone can easily surf the net, we should prescribe, always more frequently, to watch educational videos with the purpose to teach patients how to use inhaler devices correctly and, therefore, to improve therapeutic effectiveness in chronic obstructive diseases.

Author Disclosure Statement

The author declares there are no financial conflicts of interest.

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Received on April 25, 2018
in final form, April 27, 2018

Address correspondence to:
Bruno Sposato, MD
Pneumology Department
Azienda USL Toscana Sud-Est
“Misericordia” Hospital
161, Via Senese
58100 Grosseto
Italy

E-mail: bru.sposato@gmail.com