

1.13 Effect of Mandatory Face Coverings on Asthma Control For a Severe Asthma Cohort

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Prior studies have demonstrated a decrease in asthma exacerbations during the Covid-19 pandemic.^[1] One of the primary reasons is thought to be decreased exposure to respiratory viral pathogens due to face coverings and social distancing.^[1] Mandatory face covering legislation ceased in Ireland on February 28th 2022. We undertook to assess the impact of mandatory face coverings on asthma control for our severe asthma cohort in Tallaght Hospital. We reviewed the medical records of 60 patients with severe asthma on biologic therapy. 27 patients (45%) were on Omalizumab and 33 patients (55%) on anti IL-5 therapy. We compared patients Asthma Control Questionnaire (ACQ) score, peak expiratory flow rate (PEFR) and number of exacerbations from April 2021 to June 2021 inclusive with the same data for April 2022 to June 2022. 55% of patients were female. The mean age was 55 years. We found our cohort had improved asthma control during our chosen time period in 2021 compared to 2022 with lower mean ACQ score and exacerbations and higher mean PEFR. Our cohort demonstrated improved asthma control during the period with mandatory face covering legislation. Several confounding factors exist including difference in lockdown/social distancing rules and Covid-19 incidence during these time periods.

References:

1. SA Shah, JK Quint, A Shiekh. Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on asthma exacerbations: retrospective cohort study of over 500,000 patients in a national English primary care database. *Lancet Regional Health- Europe*. 2022; 19:100428. ***Conflict of Interest: None to declare***