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Refining national asthma indicators

Delphi survey and correlation analysis

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Contents

Acknowledgments	iv
Summary	v
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Purpose	1
1.2 Background	1
Delphi surveys.....	1
Correlation analysis	3
1.3 Aim and objectives.....	3
Specific objectives of the Delphi survey.....	3
Specific objectives of the correlation analysis	3
2 Methods	4
2.1 Delphi survey.....	4
2.2 Correlation analysis	5
3 Results	7
3.1 Delphi survey.....	7
Respondents.....	7
Question 1: Rating of asthma indicators	7
Question 2: Ranking of asthma indicators for retention.....	9
Question 3: Listing of potential asthma indicators for exclusion.....	9
Question 4: Suggestions for additional asthma indicators.....	11
3.2 Correlation analysis	11
Whole population analysis	11
Subpopulation analysis	12
4 Discussion	14
5 Conclusions	16
Appendix 1: The Delphi survey initial questionnaire	17
Appendix 2: Sample of results and feedback from round one circulated to respondents in round two of the Delphi survey	22
Abbreviations	34
References	35
List of tables and figures	36

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Contributors

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Summary

This report forms part of a review undertaken by ACAM to refine and simplify Australia's national asthma data monitoring system.

Why refine the list of asthma indicators?

Currently 24 indicators are recommended for monitoring asthma at a population level to guide policy relating to the prevention and management of asthma in Australia. This is too many for an efficient monitoring program. The overall aim of this body of work was to define an efficient set of indicators for asthma that are useful for stakeholders, avoid redundancy and can be measured reliably and validly using population data.

Methods used to refine the list of asthma indicators

Two separate methods were employed to assess whether the number of asthma indicators recommended for monitoring could be reduced: a Delphi survey and an analysis of correlation among the indicators. A Delphi survey is an established qualitative research method used to systematically assimilate information from people with knowledge of the topic. We used a web-based Delphi survey, conducted over two rounds, to seek input from relevant asthma experts on the importance of each of the asthma indicators. We also asked them to rate each indicator in terms of its value in providing information to policy makers about the status of asthma in Australia. In the second round, panellists were sent their own previous responses, pooled results and anonymised comments of other participants. With this information they were asked to consider refining their answers. In conjunction with this process, correlation analyses were conducted to investigate whether there was any potential redundancy among the indicators.

Refined list of core asthma indicators

In conjunction with the correlation analysis, the Delphi survey has helped to obtain consensus about the most important asthma indicators for monitoring asthma at a national level. These indicators are:

- 1) *prevalence of current asthma*
- 2) *deaths (all ages)*
- 3) *deaths (5 to 34 years)*
- 4) *hospitalisations*
- 5) *asthma control*
- 6) *general practice encounters*
- 7) *asthma action plans*
- 8) *quality of life*
- 9) *preventer use*
- 10) *costs of asthma.*

This core set of indicators should be used to gain population-based information on asthma in Australia. However, this list does not preclude the use of other indicators where they are relevant to a specific purpose.

