

Abstract ID = 8576

Presented at: Resumos em Português e Castelhana – Apresentações orais 31/05/2018 11:00-12:45

Clinical characteristics of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in Portugal

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Aim: Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is highly prevalent and results in significant health, economic and social burden. In Portugal, the number of patients diagnosed with COPD has increased 241%, between 2011 and 2016¹. Thus, the assessment of patients with COPD is becoming an essential part of today's routine clinical practice. However, there are few studies characterising Portuguese patients with COPD to support health professionals' interpretation of clinical assessments and enable comparisons with other populations. This study aimed to characterise Portuguese patients with COPD with commonly used clinical measures.

Method: A cross-sectional study was conducted. Patients with COPD were recruited from routine pulmonology appointments and primary care centres of Portugal. Assessments included a spirometric test, the modified Medical Research Council dyspnoea questionnaire (mMRC), the COPD Assessment Test, the Saint George Respiratory Questionnaire, the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale, quadriceps muscle strength, with handheld dynamometer; handgrip strength, with hydraulic hand dynamometer; maximal inspiratory/expiratory pressures; the 5-times sit-to-stand test and the 1-minute sit-to-stand test. Descriptive statistics were used to characterize the sample.

Results: 327 patients were enrolled (252 males; 66.7±10.2years; FEV₁ 60.5±25.1% predicted). Most patients were at GOLD grade 2 (n=132; 40%), followed by grade 3 (n=90; 28%), 1 (n=73; 22%) and 4 (n=32; 10%). Considering the ABCD assessment tool defined by symptoms (mMRC) and number of exacerbations, patients were mostly from group A (n=129; 39%), followed by groups B (n=95; 29%), D (n=69; 21%) and C (n=34; 10%). Table 1 presents the values obtained for each outcome measure per gender.

Conclusion: This is the first study presenting a general characterisation of Portuguese patients with COPD. Such values will inform health professionals' interpretation of clinical assessments. Future studies should explore differences and provide reference values across the ABCD groups.

Declaration of Interest

This work was funded by Programa Operacional de Competitividade e Internacionalização - COMPETE, through Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional - FEDER (POCI-01-0145-FEDER-016701), Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (PTDC/DTPPIC/2284/2014) and under the project UID/BIM/04501/2013.

References and Clinical Trial Registry Information

¹Programa Nacional para as Doenças Respiratórias. Programa Nacional para as Doenças Respiratórias 2017. Lisboa: Direção-Geral da Saúde, 2017