

# Are Patients and Physicians on the Same Page? Results of a Survey Regarding Gaps in Knowledge Among Patients with COPD and Pulmonologists on Nebulizer Therapy

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## Background:

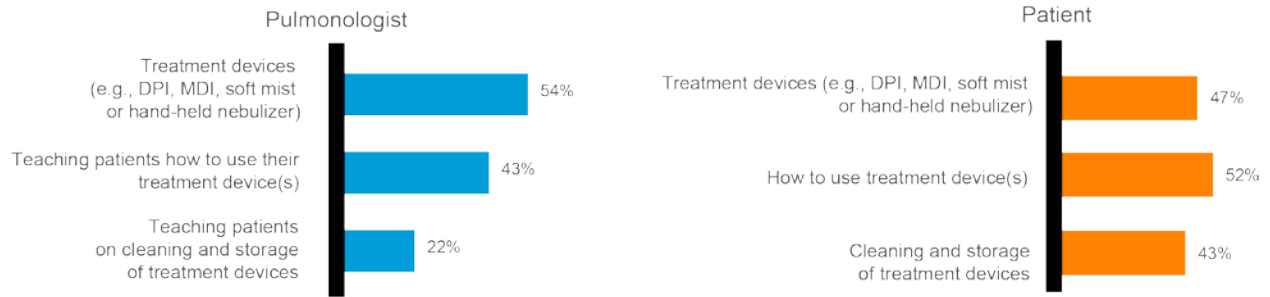
For COPD patients, there are well-established protocols for step-up care as the disease progresses. Inhalational medications have been preferred and clinicians have a number of methods of delivery to choose from, including small volume nebulizers (SVNs). Currently, there are no guidelines on when to use these delivery devices and what patient types would benefit from a specific device to achieve the best clinical outcomes. We sought to determine physicians' and patients' knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding the treatment of COPD with particular attention to the use of small volume nebulizers.

## Methods:

Two online surveys were designed by a steering committee including ATS clinicians and scientists and conducted by Harris Poll between January 7 and January 29, 2016. More than 6,200 pulmonologists and fellows from the USA were solicited via email from the ATS membership roster as well as from attendees of the ATS 2014 and 2015 International Conference, all of whom had previously indicated "COPD" as a topic of interest to them. Using a database maintained by Harris Poll, patients who had previously identified themselves as having a diagnosis of COPD in the USA were sent a similar survey. A total of 205 pulmonologists and fellows as well as 254 COPD patients completed the surveys. The robust sample size (n>100) supported quantitative analysis.

**Results:** 51% of pulmonologists report not having sufficient information regarding which device their patients use. 45% think it is the Durable Medical Equipment Vendors' responsibility to train patients on technique and cleanliness. Only 22% of pulmonologists report that they explain how to clean the device in discussions with patients, but 43% of the patients report knowledge of this topic indicating that they are getting this information from a source other than their pulmonologist. 38% of pulmonologists report having little to no knowledge on how to clean and maintain a nebulizer. 97% of pulmonologists believe that proper administration of medication is important for long term patient health, but only 69% of them feel the same about decontamination.

## EXTREMELY/VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE (NET) ABOUT INHALATION TREATMENT DEVICES



BASE: PULMONOLOGIST/FELLOW (n=205)

Q805 How knowledgeable do you feel about each of the following aspects of COPD?

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED PATIENTS (n=254)

Q800 How knowledgeable are you about each of the following aspects of COPD?

### Conclusions:

Our findings confirm that a lack of knowledge exists amongst pulmonologists and patients with respect to the use of inhaled delivery devices in COPD. These findings suggest that improved education, communication, and consensus on appropriate device selection would be helpful to guide pulmonologists regarding optimal device selection and patient training. These findings suggest understanding advancements in inhalation devices is a demonstrated pulmonologist need, and could help improve patient-physician communications regarding available treatment options.