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New Tool for Diagnosis and Monitoring of Respiratory Diseases
ARIA launches evidence-based patient questionnaires online

May 4, 2010—The Allergic Rhinitis and its Impact on Asthma (ARIA) initiative has launched a set of three simple questionnaires to help physicians diagnose and monitor asthma and allergic rhinitis in their patients. Patients can take the questionnaires (Figure 1) at <http://www.whiar.org/Questionnaire.html>.

Asthma and allergic rhinitis are two of the most common chronic respiratory diseases worldwide. More than 300 million people worldwide have asthma, which causes recurrent breathing problems such as wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and coughing, while almost 400 million people worldwide have rhinitis with its runny nose, sneezing, watery eyes, and nasal congestion. Many people with asthma also have allergic rhinitis.

“It’s important for physicians to pay attention to both of these common conditions,” says Jean Bousquet, MD, Chair of the ARIA Executive Committee and professor of medicine at the Hôpital Arnaud de Villeneuve, Montpellier, France. “Asthma patients who have rhinitis often have more asthma symptoms, but treatment of rhinitis has clearly been shown to improve asthma symptoms.” The ARIA questionnaires’ interlinked design helps physicians take advantage of this treatment synergy: patients who have or may have asthma are always asked about rhinitis, and vice versa. Several studies have found that more than 70% of known patients with asthma have concurrent rhinitis.

The questionnaires are based on the most widely endorsed global guidelines for asthma and rhinitis, produced by ARIA and Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA). Each questionnaire also includes a visual analogue scale (VAS) (Figure 2), a tool that asks patients to assess their own perceptions of the diseases by rating their symptoms from 0 (not at all bothersome) to 10 (extremely bothersome). Though simple in design, the VAS approach has been shown to be highly effective in distinguishing between patients with and without rhinitis. VAS data have been shown to be highly effective in distinguishing between patients with and without rhinitis. The ARIA questionnaires can help facilitate physician-patient communication about respiratory symptoms (Figure 3).

The ARIA (Allergic Rhinitis and its Impact on Asthma) initiative (www.whiar.org) aims to educate and implement evidence-based management of allergic rhinitis and asthma worldwide. ARIA is an international non-governmental organization of the World Health Organization’s Global Alliance against Chronic Respiratory Diseases (GARD) and works in close collaboration with the Global Allergy and Asthma European Network (GA²LEN, European Union).

For more information contact:
Larry Grouse, MD, PhD
ARIA Executive Director
lgrouse@u.washington.edu

Figure 1. To begin the interactive online module, patients are asked to choose which questionnaire (allergic rhinitis, asthma diagnosis, or asthma control) is most relevant to their respiratory symptoms and medical history.

The image shows a screenshot of the ARIA (Allergic Rhinitis and Its Impact on Asthma) website. The header features the ARIA logo, which includes a stylized human head profile with a blue and red airway system, and the text "ALLERGIC RHINITIS AND ITS IMPACT ON ASTHMA". The main navigation menu includes "Home", "About ARIA", "Documents and Resources", "News", and "Contact Us". A sidebar on the left lists these same categories. The main content area is titled "INTERACTIVE QUESTIONNAIRES" and contains two large blue boxes. The first box is titled "What is allergic rhinitis?" and contains text explaining allergic rhinitis as an exaggerated immune response to environmental allergens. It asks if the user's symptoms (sneezing, runny nose) are described by this and offers a "Take the allergic rhinitis questionnaire" button. The second box is titled "What is asthma?" and explains asthma as a chronic disease affecting the airways. It asks if the user has never been diagnosed with asthma and offers a "Take the asthma diagnosis questionnaire" button. Below this, it explains that asthma can be controlled and offers a "Take the asthma control questionnaire" button for those already diagnosed.

ARIA
ALLERGIC RHINITIS AND ITS IMPACT ON ASTHMA

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INTERACTIVE QUESTIONNAIRES

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What is allergic rhinitis?

Allergic rhinitis, also called nasal allergies or sometimes "hay fever," is an exaggerated immune system response to environmental allergens. People with allergic rhinitis often sneeze or get a runny, itchy nose when they are around things like pollen, cats and dogs, or dust.

Do you think this describes you? If you have nasal symptoms, take our brief questionnaire and find out if you should talk to your doctor about allergic rhinitis.

[Take the allergic rhinitis questionnaire](#)

What is asthma?

Asthma is a chronic (long-term) disease that affects the airways of the lungs. Asthma is caused by inflammation of the airways. The inflammation in their lungs makes it more difficult for people with asthma to breathe. People with asthma often cough, wheeze, and feel short of breath.

Do you think this describes you? If you have never been diagnosed with asthma, take our brief questionnaire and find out if you may have asthma and should ask your doctor for an assessment.

[Take the asthma diagnosis questionnaire](#)

Asthma cannot be cured, but it can be treated and controlled. When asthma is under control, most asthma attacks can be avoided. Asthma control means that people with asthma can breathe more easily, go to work and school, and enjoy a normal, active lifestyle.

Is your asthma under control? If you have been diagnosed with asthma, take our brief questionnaire and find out if your asthma is under control or if you should talk to your doctor about how to get better control.

[Take the asthma control questionnaire](#)

Figure 2. The visual analogue scale (VAS) asks patients to assess their own perceptions of their symptoms, and has been shown to be highly effective in distinguishing between patients with and without rhinitis.

Questionnaires Home

Could I have allergic rhinitis?

5. How much do your symptoms bother you?

(Click on the appropriate place along the line below to indicate how much your symptoms bother you.)

Not at all Very much

0 10

Back Next

Figure 3. After completing a questionnaire, patients can print their results to share with their doctor, helping to increase physician-patient communication about respiratory symptoms.

Could I have allergic rhinitis?

Allergic Rhinitis Questionnaire: Patient Responses

Dear Doctor, Tuesday, April 27, 2010

Your patient has taken the allergic rhinitis patient questionnaire on the Allergic Rhinitis and its Impact on Asthma (ARIA) Initiative Website (www.whiar.org). Your patient's responses to the questionnaire indicate that he or she may have Moderate/Severe Intermittent allergic rhinitis. The positive responses are listed below.

For more information about allergic rhinitis and clinical practice guidelines, please visit www.whiar.org.

What symptoms do you have?
Watery runny nose
Nasal obstruction
Itchy nose

What causes your symptoms?
Pollen from trees, flowers, and grasses
Furred animals (especially cats, dogs, and mice)

How long do your symptoms last?
More than four days a week
Less than four weeks in a row

How do your symptoms affect you?
My symptoms disturb my sleep.
My symptoms restrict my participation in school or work.

How much do your symptoms bother you?

Not at all Very much

0 10

7.45

VAS Number = 7.45