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FACTORS AFFECTING ASTHMA PSYCHOMORBIDITY, CONTROL AND ILLNESS-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE: WHAT IS THE INTERACTION?

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Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disorder of the airways, unknown etiology and growing prevalence (GINA, 2009). Appropriate asthma management can control the disorder and enable patients to enjoy a good quality of life (WHO, 2007). Yet, many asthma patients are unable to maintain asthma control (Rabe et al., 2003) for various reasons, including psychological ones (Feldman et al., 2005).

This study examined the prevalence of psych morbidity, and its interaction with asthma control difficulties and asthma-related quality of life in a sample of 200 asthma patients in Cyprus. Asthma diagnoses and severity were established by medical chart review.

Psych morbidity was evaluated using the Patient Health Questionnaire (Spitzer, 1999).

Additionally, the impact of asthma-specific (e.g. asthma knowledge), health-specific (e.g. smoking history) and socio-demographic (e.g. perceived poverty) factors was examined as prior research literature suggests these may significantly impact asthma control and asthma-related quality of life.

Currently, the present study is in its final stages of data collection (to conclude 2010).

The results will offer valuable insights into the mechanisms and factors which affect asthma control, quality of life, and psych morbidity. In doing so, the present study will contribute to the improved understanding of asthma patients' experiences, essential to guide medical and psychological interventions.