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World Spirometry Day: Experience in a Hospital Centre

Día mundial de la espirometría: experiencia en un centro hospitalario

To the Editor:

World Spirometry Day was celebrated on 14 October 2010, and was a world-wide event promoted by the *European Respiratory Society* (ERS) through its organism the *European Lung Foundation* (ELF).

The objective of this event was for the general public, professionals and authorities to learn more about the most widely used diagnostic tool among pulmonologists: spirometry. Another aim was to increase consciousness about the importance of lung diseases and the preventative measures for avoiding its appearance and/or evolution.

Among the pneumological societies, SEPAR-ALAT performed spirometries at the hospital centers in the public who attended.

From the Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau in Barcelona, we would like to share our experience with this event at our center. On the day mentioned, from 9am to 2pm, spirometries were carried out on the general public, in accordance with SEPAR procedures.¹ The event was run by 10 nurses with experience in lung function techniques (two per hour), an adjunct doctor and a resident doctor from the Pulmonology Department. The following material was used: two spirometers (Datospir 600, Sibelmed, Barcelona, Spain), stadiometer, scale, disposable mouthpieces, tissues and antiseptic hand gel, while informational material about spirometries² and the dangerous effects of smoking,³ translated in Spanish, were distributed. Prior to the test, a 12-question survey⁴ was administered, as proposed by the ERS and ELF and translated into Spanish, in order to obtain more information on the people interested in doing the test. The physicians in charge of the clinic completed spirometry reports, and those patients' whose results were altered were remitted to their Primary Attention physician with a letter reporting on the degree of alteration. All smokers were given minimal anti-tobacco advice as well as the informational material that was available.³

The media were informed of the event with the aim of their helping to spread knowledge about spirometry among the general

public, as well as the importance of early detection and prevention of some of the most prevalent lung diseases.

Seventy-five spirometries were carried out. Mean (standard deviation) age of the participants was 56.3 (17.8) and forced expiratory volume in one second (FEV₁) was 2.58 (0.92) L [88.3 (20.8)%]. There was a slight predominance of women (n = 39, 52%). The percentage of smokers or ex-smokers was 49%. Obstructive pathology was observed (FEV₁/FVC < 70%) in 20 of the subjects participating (27%), 6 of whom (30%) had never been tested with spirometry before. Out of the 32 active smokers, 8 (25%) presented airway obstruction. Out of all the participants, 29 (39%) manifested having performed the test before, and only 33 (44%) stated having knowledge of the test.

This event had very good acceptance and participation amongst the population, and it allowed us to detect some cases of spirometric alterations that were previously unknown.

The degree of knowledge of this test is still quite low in the general public. It is therefore recommendable to organize future editions of World Spirometry Day in order to share information and spread understanding of this test, as well as possibly detecting individuals with respiratory diseases early on and therefore be able to take categorical steps in controlling risk factors and trigger mechanisms.

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