

Asthma is NOT WELL CONTROLLED in Bermuda!

70% of people with asthma in Bermuda do not have their asthma well controlled (according to a recent Open Airways perception survey).

Open Airways has been working in Bermuda for over 22 years with the mission to “Help Bermuda Breathe”. In that time admissions to hospital for asthma have dropped by 83%, however a staggering 70% still have poorly controlled asthma! Emergency room visits for asthma have dropped but we still have an average of 4 people visiting the emergency room every day for asthma.



Open Airways sees people every day with asthma who feel that they have control, but what does asthma control look like and are we in agreement?

Many studies around the world have shown a disconnect with how someone rates their asthma control and how a healthcare professional rates their control.

Asthma control should mean;

- **no wheezing**
- **no coughing**
- **no asthma attacks**
- **no waking at night with asthma**
- **no missed school days or work**
- **no visits to the emergency room**
- **no KEMH admissions for asthma**

Open Airways – “Perception of Asthma Control in Bermuda” – Survey

To investigate the perception of control in Bermuda, Open Airways prepared an online survey which was carried out in February and March 2019. Our aim was to evaluate perception of asthma control, to help Open Airways clearly define the work needed in Bermuda and how we could be of most help to our asthma population.

The online survey (kindly supported by the Bank of Bermuda Foundation) aimed to assess asthma control, perceived and actual, to assess treatment choices and beliefs related to those choices. The survey was made available to our existing database as well as being promoted via social media (Facebook) and radio and print media.

Asthma is the most common chronic condition in the world. In Bermuda we estimate it affects 1 in 5 children and 1 in 10 adults, which equates to approximately 8000 people.

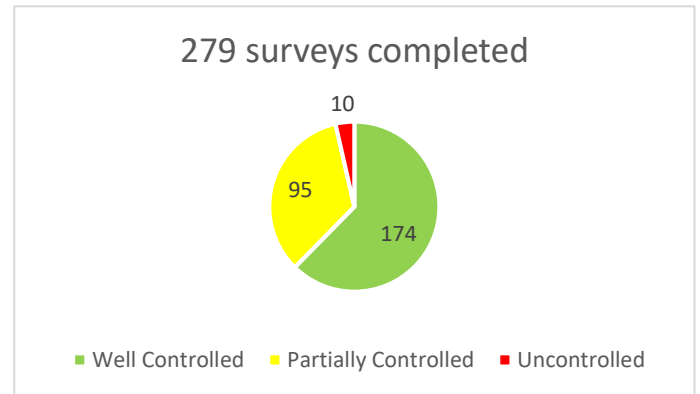
Asthma is a common, variable, disabling and potentially life-threatening disease, however with the correct treatment asthma is controllable.

RESULTS - OVERALL

279 people with asthma of all ages completed our survey.

They were asked to define their asthma as: Well Controlled, Partially Controlled or Uncontrolled.

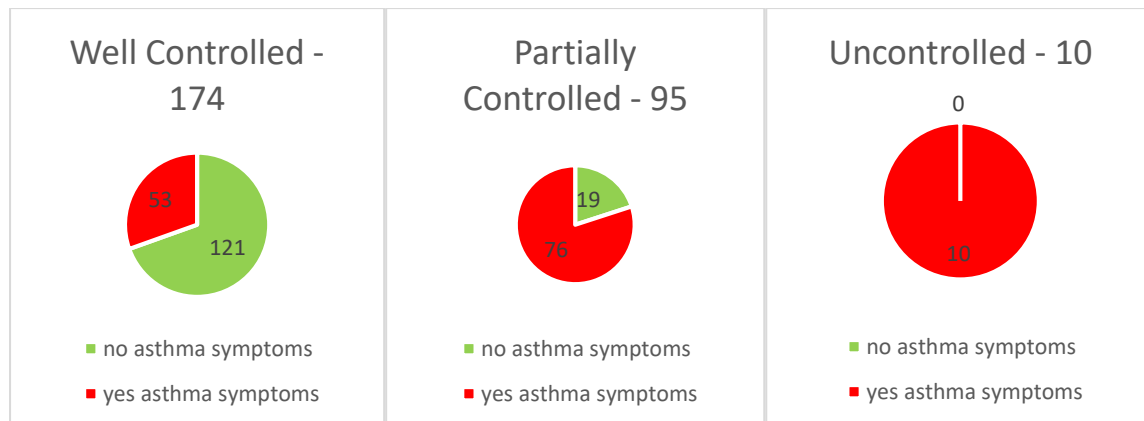
Of all survey responses, 174 thought they were well controlled, 95 were partially controlled and 10 felt they were uncontrolled.



We then asked them if they had had asthma symptoms in the week before completing the survey with the following results:

- **Of the 174 who defined themselves as well controlled, 53 people or 30% had asthma symptoms in the previous week.**
- **Of the 95 who defined themselves as partially controlled, 76 or 80% had asthma symptoms in the previous week.**
- **Of the 10 who defined themselves as uncontrolled, 10 or 100% had asthma symptoms in the previous week.**

Symptoms in week prior to survey



When we looked further at emergency room visits and days off work or school in the previous year it revealed that of the 174 who felt they were uncontrolled over half (52%) were actually not controlled.

Emergency room visits

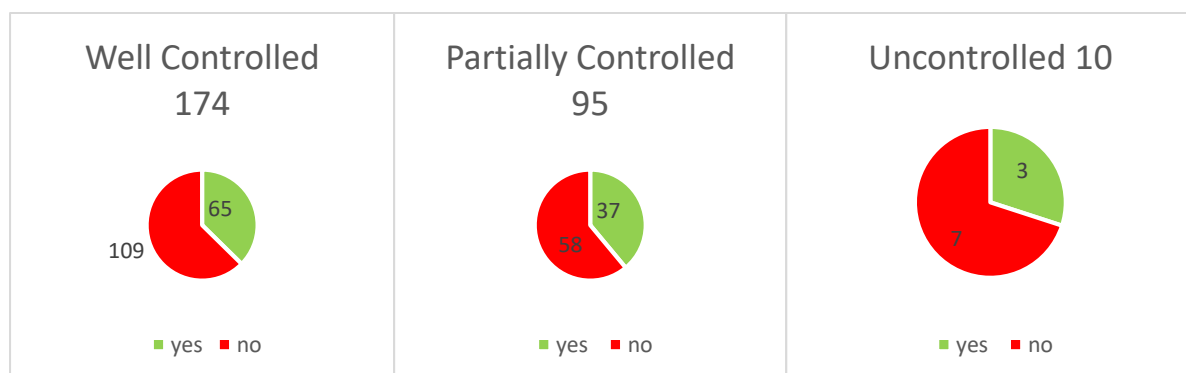
FACT: Asthma is the #1 reason for visits to emergency room with almost 4 visits every day. Last year, there were 1,415 asthma related visits to the ER.

- **Of the 174 well controlled, 29 (17%) had visited emergency room in the previous year.**
 - 25 had 1 or 2 visits in previous year,
 - 3 had 3 to 5 visits and
 - 1 person had 6 to 10 visits to emergency room but still felt they were well controlled.
 - 5 people in the well-controlled group were admitted to KEMH in the previous year.
- **Of the 95 partially controlled, 32 (37%) had visited emergency room in previous year.**
 - 23 had 1 or 2 visits in previous year and 9 had 3 to 5 visits in previous year.
 - 9 people in the partially controlled group were admitted to KEMH in previous year.
- **Of the 10 uncontrolled, 7 (70%) had visited the emergency room in previous year**
 - 4 had 1 or 2 visits in previous year and 3 had 3 to 5 visits in previous year.
 - 1 person was admitted to KEMH in previous year.

Daily Prevention Use

We know that asthma control is easily achieved by taking the preventer inhalers daily as prescribed, but when we looked at preventer use in our survey, we found the following:

- **Of the 174 who felt they were well controlled people only 65 or 37% were using preventers daily.**
- **Of the 95 who felt they were partially controlled only 37 or 39% were using preventers daily.**
- **Of the 10 who felt they were uncontrolled only 3 or 30% were using preventers daily.**



From our survey we could see that many people were not using prevention daily and we wanted to know what their beliefs were related to daily prevention. The responses we received were as follows:

- 103 people felt it was not necessary to use daily prevention inhalers if feeling well, however 44 people in this group or 43% had experienced asthma symptoms more than twice in the previous week and 24 people in this group had visited the emergency room in previous year.
- 45 people responded that they sometimes forget to use their daily prevention, yet 31 people in this group or 69% had asthma symptoms more than twice in the previous week and 12 people in this group had visited the emergency room in previous year.
- Only 2 people responded that they could not afford to use daily prevention.

Missing school and/or work

We also looked at time off school or work with asthma, of the 279 people:

- 74 people had 1 to 2 days off school/work and
- 12 had 3 to 5 days off school/work,
- 1 person missed 6 to 10 days and
- 1 person more than 10 days.

Conclusion

The results of this recent survey clearly indicate that the perception of asthma control and the reality of asthma control are vastly different. Many people do not fully understand what good control of asthma looks like and are living with asthma symptoms on a weekly basis. The results have indicated a clear need for more education to the public on what asthma control should be. People with asthma are encouraged to visit their GP's for review of their asthma on an annual basis, at which time treatment options, device and inhaler techniques and asthma action plans should be discussed.

We encourage people to reach out to Open Airways for help with their asthma. Our free consultations endeavour to provide a deeper education to improve a person's understanding of their asthma and enable them to work better to improve their asthma control and reduce their risks of asthma attacks and potentially asthma deaths. As stated earlier, with proper control, people with asthma can live a healthy and vibrant life, participating in any and all activities desired, including sports.

To contact Open Airways for assistance with your asthma, or to receive further details about the survey, please contact: Tracy Nash nurse@openairways.com Liz Boden liz@openairways.com or call 232-0264