

Air pollution – awareness among the most susceptible groups of patients

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Air pollution is one of the most important and often underestimated causes of death worldwide. The study evaluates awareness of its effects on health, access to information and seeking protection from pollution among the most susceptible population.

Materials and methods: A 22-item survey was constructed (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.81$), including two parts, 1 - 'Awareness' and 2 - 'Personal protection and access to information' and four independent questions. It was distributed among 107 hospital patients at high risk of adverse health effects from air pollution.

Results: Scores in part 1 of the survey were relatively high. Lower results were achieved in the

second part. Significant differences in responses to the surveys were found depending on gender, age and education. Patients' main sources of information are (in order): television, the Internet and radio. Access to information was mostly rated as insufficient. Few patients use anti-pollution facemasks or indoor air filters (5.8% and 2.9%, respectively).

Conclusions: Despite patients' decent awareness, access to information is poor among the most susceptible population and needs to be improved urgently. More reliable sources of information need to be provided.

Keywords: Air, pollution, awareness, survey, susceptible

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