

The importance of Pulmonary Rehabilitation in Kyrgyzstan in the framework of the International RECHARGE project

Azamat Akylbekov¹, Aidai Rysbek kyzy¹, Maisa Alimova², Michael Steiner³, Andy Barton⁴, Robert C. Free⁵, Theresa Harvey-Dunstan⁶, Rupert Jones⁴, Ruhme Miah⁵, Mark Orme⁵, Talant Sooronbaev¹, Sally Singh⁵

¹National Centre of Cardiology and Internal Medicine named after academician M. Mirrakhimov - Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), ²City TB Hospital - Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), ³University of Leicester - Leicester (United Kingdom), ⁴University of Plymouth - Plymouth (United Kingdom), ⁵University of Leicester - Leicester (United Kingdom), ⁶University of Nottingham - Nottingham (United Kingdom)

Background: Against the background of the high incidence of chronic lung diseases and the high cost of medicines, developing of an appropriate program of pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) for low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) is of the utmost importance.

Objectives: The main goal of the questionnaire-based study was to find out what the readiness of population of Kyrgyzstan is to implement PR and understand its importance. Patients with post-tuberculosis changes in the lungs and respiratory diseases, as well as health workers took part.

Methods: Within one week, 30 patients from four medical institutions and 30 medical workers from different disciplines participated in the study. Participants completed the questionnaire in a comfortable environment, without any pressure or time limit, at their workplaces or in the wards.

Results: Of the 30 patients surveyed, most were female (N=17, 56.6%), aged <40 years (N=12, 40%), unemployed (N=16, 53.3%) and reported breathing problems (N=26, 86.7%). The main problem of the patient respondents was low tolerance to physical exertion and reduced quality of life. Of all study participants, 27 patients (90%) agreed to participate in PR. Thoughts of healthcare workers on PR eligibility are provided in Figure 1, with the main reason for referring to PR cited as frequent exacerbations (73.3%). The main reason for not referring to PR is patient refusal (37.9%). Healthcare workers, for the most part, believe that patients with post-tuberculosis changes and respiratory diseases should attend PR program (60%).

Conclusions: As can be seen, patients with post-tuberculosis changes and respiratory diseases in Kyrgyzstan need a PR program and are ready to participate in it. Healthcare workers also support the implementation of PR in Kyrgyzstan. It is curious that health workers believe that patients will not participate in PR, when, judging by the answers of the patients, the situation is reversed.