

‘Speak up for asthma’ program for school children in London

Healthy London Partnership Partners: Charity Asthma UK, University College London Medical School, The Royal Free NHS London Foundation Trust

# Background

There are three children with asthma in every classroom in English secondary schools. Asthma UK charity data show that more than 75% of hospital visits are preventable by better recognition of symptoms and early management.

Secondary school children in Denmark have demonstrated improved outcomes after being taught basic resuscitation for cardiac arrest.

This project set up a sustainable university-based project aimed at improving asthma awareness school children

# Action

A paediatric Consultant trained medical students in asthma recognition and paediatric management to complement Asthma UK’s lay person advocacy programme - Speak Up For Asthma (SUFA).

The medical students delivered an interactive presentation to schoolchildren aged 8-14 years.

The effectiveness of the programme was measured by comparing results of an asthma awareness test before and after interactive presentation.

# Outcomes

600+ children have gone through awareness training in schools

38% increase in pre and post-presentation test scores. Maximum increase noted in questions related to inhaler use and emergency procedure. A short term knowledge gain. More studies needed to assess long term application of acquired knowledge.

Results of the pilot project were presented at the Paediatric Allergy and Asthma Meeting in Athens in October 2013.

Gained permission to extend campaign to another 1000 children due to excellent feedback on pilot from children, school nurses and teachers.

Commissioned to write our experience in a peer reviewed journal – Clinical Pulmonary Medicine

Received £3000 from NHS England Regional innovation fund to explore further opportunities and spread the programme.

Improved access to inhalers for children with asthma.

School teams feel more confident at recognising asthma attack and seek help.

The literature states that education and empowerment of children through programmes such as ours are valuable in reducing hospital visits (not so easy to measure).

Compliments Governments guidance on use of Salbutamol inhaler in schools

# Learning

UCL has granted a Special Study Module for15 medical students/Year.

Consultants are happy to support training and supervision.

Very little ongoing capital expenditure is needed.

Long term studies are needed to assess reduction in hospital use and improved quality of life.

# Top tips

Access to schools requires good planning & CRB checks.

Engage as many stakeholders as possible.

Excellent support from head of school nursing in Camden opened up many doors.

# Further information

*More information on Guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in schools:*

[*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-asthma-inhalers-for-use-in-schools*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-asthma-inhalers-for-use-in-schools)

Coppel JD, Gibson LL, Chodhari R, Wilson R. Methods and benefits of education in pediatric asthma. Clin Pulm Med 2014;21:275–281

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