

Prevalence of Smoking and Chronic Bronchitis with Associated Risk Factors in Albania

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Abstract

Background: Although chronic bronchitis symptoms are commonly reported, data on their prevalence across countries, especially in individuals with normal lung function, are limited.

Aims: The main aim of the study was to determine the prevalence of chronic bronchitis and its associated risk factors in Albania. Another aim was to estimate the prevalence of smoking.

Methods: This study is a cross sectional one. A representative population-based sample of adults aged ≥ 40 years was randomly selected in participating centres. Participants who provided written consent, completed a detailed questionnaire. This kind of study was conducted for the first time in Albania and was part of the

BOLD study.

Results: A total of 1200 participants were interviewed, and 997 (83%) were eligible for inclusion. 496 of them (49.75%) were males and 501 (50.25%) were females. The prevalence of smoking among population aged ≥ 40 years was 22.4%. The prevalence among males was higher compared to females (38.8% versus 6.5%). Smoking prevalence in age group 20-39 years was 28.6%; respectively 40.3% in males and 16.8% in females.

The prevalence of chronic bronchitis was 10.6%, and it was higher in males than in females (14.7% vs. 6.6%). The prevalence was higher among the active smokers and ex-smokers compared to non-smokers (4.1% vs. 0.4%), and higher in age

groups 60-69 and ≥ 70 years old (14.5% and 23.5%) compared to other age groups; 40-49 and 50-59 years old (5.6% and 7.1%). The under-diagnosis of chronic bronchitis was more noticeable among subjects with symptoms of chronic bronchitis, only 1.6% declared a previously known diagnosis.

Conclusion: Our study shows a high prevalence of smoking and chronic bronchitis in Albania. We observed a new increasing trend of smoking in young females at age group 20-39 years old compared to other groups ≥ 40 years old. Another finding is that chronic bronchitis is markedly under-diagnosed in the general population.

Keywords: Chronic bronchitis, Prevalence, Smoking, Cohort study