

Dry mouth syndrome can be a symptom of asthma

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Tongue of a female patient suffering from xerostomia.

Scientists at the University of Granada and the High Resolution Hospital in Loja (Granada) prove that asthmatic patients who suffer from xerostomia (dry mouth syndrome) have a poorer level of control disease. Whether an asthmatic patient also suffers from severe xerostomia can be of great use for the pneumologist when it comes to establishing that

particular patient's level of control disease.

Xerostomia is the subjective perception of dryness in the [mouth](#) due to malfunction of the salivary glands. It affects 50% of the population over sixty, and it can affect more than 90% of hospitalized patients. It is a frequent symptom in patients suffering from a diversity of diseases, and it affects their quality of life and mouth health.

For their part, inhaled corticosteroids (ICs) constitute the basic treatment for patients with [bronchial asthma](#), and they are applied by means of inhaling devices through the oral cavity.

ICs in current use for [asthma treatment](#) have a very low level of bioavailability, i.e. they work at local level and pass in a very small percentage onto general circulation. This is the reason why their systemic effects are minimal. The effects of ICs at local level, in particular over oral mucosa, has so far been very little studied.

A study with 74 patients

To conduct this study, these researchers from Granada analysed a total of 57 [asthma patients](#) plus 17 healthy ones, who acted as control group. They could thus confirm that a large percentage of [asthma patients](#) also suffered from xerostomia.

"Our data indicate that treatments with high ICs doses diminish the production of salivary protein MUC5B, which has a protective function on the buccal mucosa" says Pedro José Romero Palacios, full professor at the Medicine department, University of Granada, and principal investigator in this research. Clinically this effect results in xerostomia (dry mouth), and is generally associated with a poorer control of asthma.

Under the light shed by this study, scientists concluded that there is a

moderate relation between the level of asthma control and the severity of xerostomia.

More information: "Xerostomia relates to the degree of asthma control." *J Oral Pathol Med* (2014). [DOI: 10.1111/jop.12228](https://doi.org/10.1111/jop.12228)

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