

Older adults with asthma are happier when they have more say in their care

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It's clear an increasing number of people want a say in their medical care. A new study shows older people with asthma are among those no longer content to say, "Up to you, Doc" and then wait to be told how to move forward with their care.

The study, published in *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*, the scientific journal of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) surveyed 189 adults over the age of 55 with [asthma](#). The study used the Autonomy Patient Index, an 11-question survey designed to help physicians understand how much [patients](#) like to be involved in their medical care.

"Our study showed that a greater desire for involvement—demonstrated by a higher decision-making score—was associated with a better quality of life," says allergist Keerthi Karamched, MD, ACAAI member and lead author of the study. "We also found that female gender, higher education level and lower depression scores were associated with higher decision-making scores. What we know historically is that increasing patient involvement in asthma care—through use of asthma action plans and education—has shown an improvement in asthma overall."

Of the 189 participants in the study 74 percent were women. The average age was 66, and 43 percent of the participants were diagnosed with asthma after the age of 40. The median education level was college graduate.

"The findings were significant because people with a higher level of independence are likely to empower and involve themselves in [medical care](#), giving themselves a greater sense of overall control," says allergist Alan Baptist, MD, ACAAI member and co-author of the study.

"Physicians tend to underestimate the amount of information people want regarding their medical condition. This study emphasizes that appreciating how much patients want to be involved in their care may improve outcomes and create a stronger relationship between patient and allergist."

More information: Keerthi R. Karamched et al. The impact of patient autonomy on older adults with asthma, *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology* (2018). [DOI: 10.1016/j.anai.2018.04.024](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anai.2018.04.024)

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