

QUALITY OF LIFE IN WORK RELATED ASTHMA: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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Work-related asthma (WRA) (occupational asthma (OA) and work-exacerbated asthma (WEA)) is a common respiratory condition. Our aim was to provide an overview of the literature on this topic.

We conducted a systematic literature search on Medline using a sensitive search string for occupational diseases combining search terms for quality of life and WRA. We extracted and summarized data on study design, population characteristics, quality of life measurement instruments, and results.

The literature search yielded 511 hits. 17 fulfilled the inclusion criteria. Most of the papers (9/17) originated from Canada and had a cross-sectional design (14/17). Comparisons of the quality of life for different groups (i.e. OA vs. non-OA, OA vs. WEA or OA employed vs. OA non-employed) were reported in 7/17 papers. Study size ranged from 10 to 38,000. Most of the papers used asthma-specific quality of life instruments: Juniper-AQLQ (11/17), Marks-AQLQ (2/17). Generic instruments (e.g. SF-12 or SF-36) were used in 6/17 studies.

Overall, the quality of life of persons with WRA is lower than that of persons with non-WRA, also in the long-term. Exposure avoidance is associated with better quality of life. Furthermore, quality of life impairments are greater for the unemployed than for those who continue working.