Asthma Disease Management: A Provider’s Perspective
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Abstract
Asthma is a highly prevalent problem in Singapore, with an increasing societal and economic burden. However, asthma is also an eminently treatable condition, with evidence that integrated education-treatment efforts directed at important patient sub-groups can be cost-effective. What is important is a comprehensive and integrated asthma management programme, aimed at reducing the burden of asthma at all levels of the healthcare system, with the long-term goal of improving asthma care cost-effectively. This refers to asthma disease management. Asthma disease management should focus on identifying deficiencies in asthma management across the population diagnosed with the condition and establish a partnership between the patient, provider and the healthcare system to improve the overall quality of asthma care. The framework for implementing such a programme bridges key concepts and programmes that are already in place in the various institutions. These include patient and physician education, the use of clinical practice guidelines, clinical pathways, outcomes management, quality improvement processes, information technology, case management and existing asthma shared-care programmes and resources. In order to significantly reduce asthma morbidity, an integrated approach is required, involving individuals providing asthma care at various levels of care delivery. There is also a need to co-ordinate the efforts of such individuals and institutions involved so that there is good horizontal and vertical integration of care. The disease management approach described is intended to raise the overall standard of asthma care across a spectrum of patients with asthma.

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