

Prevalence and management of childhood asthma in urban poor communities in the philippines: A community-based study

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Statement: Asthma is one of the most common chronic diseases in Filipino children, yet remains underdiagnosed and undertreated—especially in low-income urban settings. Environmental triggers, lack of education, and poor access to healthcare contribute to frequent exacerbations and hospitalizations. This study assesses the prevalence, management practices, and challenges associated with childhood asthma in urban poor communities of Metro Manila. A cross-sectional, community-based study was conducted across three densely populated barangays in Manila. A total of 300 children aged 5–12 years were screened using standardized ISAAC (International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood) questionnaires. Data on asthma symptoms, environmental exposures, and healthcare access were collected. Interviews with caregivers and health workers were conducted, and spirometry tests were performed where feasible. The study found a 19.3% prevalence rate of asthma among the surveyed children. Only 27% had a formal diagnosis and 18% were on maintenance medications. Environmental triggers included air pollution, smoking in the household, and poor ventilation. Most caregivers lacked awareness of proper asthma management, and 70% relied on emergency care rather than preventive treatment. Childhood asthma in urban poor communities in the Philippines is significantly underdiagnosed and poorly managed. Educational programs for caregivers and health workers, along with improved access to maintenance therapy, are critical in reducing the burden of pediatric asthma. Community-based health education and early intervention can improve outcomes and reduce hospitalizations.

Biography

Rafael Antonio D. Cruz is a pediatric pulmonologist and clinical researcher based in Manila. He serves as a consultant at the University of Santo Tomas Hospital and is actively involved in community health outreach programs. His expertise focuses on pediatric respiratory diseases, particularly asthma in underserved populations. Cruz has collaborated with local health departments to implement asthma awareness campaigns and training for barangay health workers. With over 15 years of experience, he continues to advocate for accessible and sustainable asthma care solutions for Filipino children. He frequently presents his work at national pediatric and public health conferences.

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