Reviewer’s report

Title: Ambulatory oxygen: why do patients with COPD not use their portable systems as prescribed? A qualitative study

Version: 1 Date: 26 October 2010

Reviewer: Thomas Ringbaek

Reviewer’s report:

This paper is based on interview of 27 patients and their relative on how the patients use ambulatory oxygen (AO), and reasons for not using it.

The subject is relevant for the subgroup of respiratory physicians and nurses who are responsible for home oxygen therapy. It’s well written.

27 patients entered the study. I miss information on how many were invited but refused.

It’s a mixture of patients (n=25) on LTOT with a portable oxygen system (need oxygen as many hours as possible) and patients (n=2) on only ambulatory oxygen (only need oxygen on exertion). In the first situation, the patients should use oxygen as many hours as possible, regardless of the subjective effect on exertion (not as stated by the author in discussion “..to remain mobile and socially active”). In the second situation (AO), oxygen is used to relieve symptoms during exercise/daily activity in order to facilitate daily activity – primary outside home.

The authors pointed at different reasons for not using AO

1) Lack of information: It’s difficult to use the information given by the authors, when you don’t know what kind of instructions the patients have received.

2) Lack of benefit is stated as a reason for not using AO. However, in most of the patients (those 25 on LTOT) this is not the main purpose (but to alleviate hypoxemia most of the day). It seems that patients were not correctly instructed about the purpose of prescribing oxygen – both stationary and portable oxygen.

3) Fear the AO might run out: At most hospitals, patients can ask for different oxygen systems/equipment. Could the patients ask for extra cylinders; an on demand valve; a potable oxygen concentrator?

Ref. 26: Correct that only 58% were using the mobile system, but there was no information on reasons for not using the oxygen.

I can’t recommend this paper for publication. I think that this paper brings very little.