Treatment of COPD Exacerbation in Switzerland: Results and Recommendations of the European COPD Audit

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BACKGROUND
The European COPD Audit initiated by the European Respiratory Society (ERS) evaluated the management of hospital admissions due to exacerbation of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in several European countries. Data on the treatment of severe acute exacerbations of COPD (AECOPDs) in Switzerland are scarce.

OBJECTIVES
In light of the GOLD 2010 guidelines, this work aims to examine the quality of care for AECOPD and to provide specific recommendations for the management of severe AECOPD in Switzerland.

METHODS
A total of 295 patients requiring hospital admission to 19 Swiss hospitals due to exacerbation of COPD during a predefined 60 days in 2011 were included in the study. We compared the Swiss data to the official GOLD 2010 recommendations and to the results of the other European countries.

RESULTS
Approximately 43% of the Swiss patients with severe AECOPD were current smokers at hospital admission, compared to 33% of the patients in other European countries (p < 0.001). In Switzerland and in Europe, spirometry data were not available for most patients at hospital admission (65 and 60%, respectively; p = 0.08). In comparison to other European countries, antibiotics were prescribed 14% less often in Switzerland (p < 0.001). Only 79% of the patients in the Swiss cohort received treatment with a short-acting bronchodilator at admission.

CONCLUSIONS
Considering the overall high standard of health care in Switzerland, in light of the GOLD 2010 guidelines we are able to make 7 recommendations to improve and standardize the management of severe AECOPD for patients treated in Switzerland.

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