



Technical Brief Disposition of Comments Report

Research Review Title: Characteristics of Existing Asthma Self-Management Education Packages

Draft report available for public comment from November 26, 2019, to December 24, 2019.

Research Review Citation: Leas BF, Tipton K, Bryant-Stephens T, Jackson-Ware M, Mull N, Tsou AY. Characteristics of Existing Asthma Self-Management Packages. Technical Brief No. 35. (Prepared by ECRI Institute – Penn Medicine EPC under Contract No. 290-2015-00005.) AHRQ Publication No. 20-EHC008. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. April 2020. doi: <https://doi.org/10.23970/AHRQEPCTB35>
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Comments to Draft Report

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Comments on draft reports and the authors' responses to the comments are posted for public viewing on the Web site approximately 3 months after the final report is published. Comments are not edited for spelling, grammar, or other content errors. Each comment is listed with the name and affiliation of the commentator, if this information is provided. Commentators are not required to provide their names or affiliations in order to submit suggestions or comments.

This document includes the responses by the authors of the report to comments that were submitted for this draft report. The responses to comments in this disposition report are those of the authors, who are responsible for its contents, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Summary of Peer Reviewer Comments and Author Response

This research review underwent peer review before the draft report was posted for public comment on the EHC website.

- We received only a modest amount of peer review comments. Most comments praised the quality of the Technical Brief and did not include substantive suggestions for editing or improving the final draft.
- The comments that did suggest revisions focused primarily on future directions for research and development of AS-ME packages. Several suggestions were incorporated into the final draft as recommendations within the Next Steps section. These include comments regarding development of mobile apps, use of asthma action plans, comparative effectiveness of varying types of educators, sensitivity to differing styles of learning, and standardization of a core educational content for AS-ME packages.
- Some comments cited difficulty interpreting Figure 6, particularly regarding its use of color. For the final draft, we renamed and moved to the Figure to an earlier section of the report and removed the color scheme. We anticipate that these changes will improve the usefulness and clarity of the figure.

Commentator & Affiliation	Section	Comment	Response
Tracey Mitchell, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Introduction	Introduction clearly articulates the purpose of the research and the report.	Thank you for your review and feedback
Stanley Szefler	Introduction	The introduction summarizes the rationale for conducting this detailed evaluation and proposes 5 areas to evaluate	Thank you for your review and feedback.
Public Reviewer #5	Introduction	Good summary and background on the need of the study, good supporting information.	Thank you for your comments.
Lorene Alba, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA)	Methods	The guiding questions developed by the key informant issues were very helpful. It would also be helpful to know what organizations the key informants represented to better understand how the questions were developed.	The Key Informants and their affiliations are listed in the front matter of the final report. This information was not included in the version posted for public comment per AHRQ procedures.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Methods	A few packages were not included in this review because they could not be accessed. It would be helpful to have those programs reviewed and included in this technical brief to get a more complete picture of what is available.	We regrettably could not acquire access to other packages during the timeframe of the review.
Stanley Szefler	Methods	The questions and methods to evaluate the questions are well described.	Thank you for your comments.
Public Reviewer #5	Methods	Clear, good detail, used variety of sources	Thank you for your review and feedback.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	Listing the packages with their components listed in easy-to-read charts is appreciated. The charts are an extremely useful tool to help us internally when thinking about how we move forward with updating or developing AS-ME.	Thank you for your review and feedback.

Source: <https://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/products/asthma-education/technical-brief>

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Commentator & Affiliation	Section	Comment	Response
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	<p>Patient Population Section Feedback</p> <p>In this section, AAFA programs ASTHMA Care for Adults, Wee Breathers and You Can Control Your Asthma were included. AAFA has an additional program, Severe ASTHMA Care for Adults, a free, self-paced online course geared to patients living with severe or poorly controlled asthma. This course covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of severe asthma • Severe asthma medicines and treatments • Reducing the use of oral corticosteroids • Controlling triggers • Importance of control • Partnering with your doctor • Managing the financial, emotional and social impact of severe asthma <p>AAFA's Severe ASTHMA Care for Adults should reviewed and added to the Tables as an AS-ME package.</p>	Thank you for drawing our attention to the Severe ASTHMA Care for Adults Package. We have added this package to our review.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	<p>Language and Literacy</p> <p>All materials should be culturally respectful and geared toward the intended audience. Inviting members of the community to be part of the development and dissemination of the package will help ensure materials are culturally appropriate.</p> <p>It is not enough for AS-ME packages to be written in plain language, or at a sixth-grade reading level or below. It is critical to use health literacy principles. At a minimum, all packages should go through readability formulas such as Flesch Kincaid or the Gunning Fog Index. Use of illustrations, pictures and icons should be used whenever possible. Using the CDC and National Institutes of Health Clear Communication resources are recommended.</p>	We agree that cultural appropriateness and literacy should be key priorities during the design and development of AS-ME packages, and we encourage future research on these issues.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	<p>Table 3. Asthma Self-Management Education Packages: Audience, Patient Population, Setting and Language</p> <p>In Table 3 there is some incorrect information for ASTHMA Care for Adults. The program has three versions; the first is a self-paced, online course for patients and caregivers, the second version is a printed package facilitated in-person by a nurse, respiratory therapist or asthma educator, and the third version offers the facilitated package in a downloadable format available on AAFA's website. The printed and downloadable packages offer facilitators the resources and training they need to deliver this out-of-the box training. Although the program is not geared toward children under 18, it does address accommodations for higher education settings and can be implemented at a college and university level for adult students. Also, ASTHMA Care for Adults is listed as being available in Spanish, but AAFA does not offer a Spanish version yet.</p> <p>You Can Control Asthma has been implemented in many diverse settings, including daycare centers and asthma camp. The curriculum is appropriate for and should be included in the "Preschool Age Setting" column.</p>	Thank you for these corrections and clarifications. We have updated Table 3 accordingly.

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Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	<p>Accessibility This section reads: <i>Access to You Can Control Asthma is restricted to AAFA members who can purchase materials that range from \$8 for an individual patient workbook to \$50 for a full set of materials (including child and family workbooks and the implementation guide); the AAFA’s Asthma Care for Adults package can be downloaded for free, or printed and bound editions can be purchased for \$90.</i></p> <p>An AAFA membership is not required to purchase its materials. The ASTHMA Care for Adults printed version is provided at no cost for those who qualify, such as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs).</p>	Thank you for the clarification. We have updated that paragraph to reflect that AAFA membership is not required for You Can Control Asthma, and to highlight the free availability of ASTHMA Care for Adults for qualified recipients.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	<p>Table 4. Asthma Self-Management Education Packages: Delivery and Accessibility ASTHMA Care for Adults is listed as a “fee for some components.” There is no fee for patients or caregivers to take the online course, and there is no fee for facilitators to access the downloadable package online. The printed facilitators guide and handouts can be purchased for \$90 but are offered at no cost for those who qualify, such as FQHCs.</p>	We have updated Table 4 to clarify the availability of ASTHMA Care for Adults
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	<p>Table 5. Asthma Self-Management Education Packages: Curriculum ASTHMA Care for Adults does address the use of spacers, peak flow meters and the psychosocial elements of having asthma. Peak flow meters are also addressed in Wee Breathers.</p>	Thank you for the clarifications. We have updated Table 5 with these corrections.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	<p>Table 6. Asthma Self-Management Education Packages: Content Features ASTHMA Care for Adults includes a symptom tracking sheet for patients to use and give to their doctor. The program also offers a certificate of completion. Wee Breathers does include handouts and is a evidence-based program. Validation for the program can be found here: https://www.aafa.org/media/2175/wee-breathers-full-programenglish.pdf.</p>	Thank you for the clarifications. We have updated Table 6 with these corrections.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	The methodology of how the AS-ME packages were funded, developed, pilot tested, disseminated and evaluated are most likely not needed in patient-facing materials and curricula. However, this information would be helpful if accessible upon request to inform other organizations who are looking to develop their own AS-ME packages.	Thank you for your review and feedback.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have been the main funder of most of the AS-ME packages reviewed. A development and dissemination report produced by CDC could be useful.	Thank you for your comments.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	A deeper dive into how the packages are being tailored to local audiences or audiences with comorbid conditions would be helpful.	We agree that this would be a useful avenue for future research, and identified it as an important Next Step in the Summary and Implications section.

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Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	<p>Before a new asthma package is developed, organizations should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Conducting a needs assessment to ensure the package fills a current gap in AS-ME education •Review current packages to reduce duplication of efforts •Convene stakeholders from the community the package will serve •Develop a sustainability plan for implementation once the grant funding ends. AS-ME programs take time to develop, test, implement and evaluate, which can take an entire three- to five-year grant cycle. Having a plan to fund the program beyond the initial grant cycle is critical to build upon initial momentum •Develop a plan for how minor and major content edits will made, for instance, how to incorporate the new National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute EPR-4 guidelines •Develop a plan for continued support and technical assistance to those who implement the program 	Thank you for your review and feedback.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	<p>AAFA has a variety of AS-ME packages that can be delivered in different ways. ASTHMA Care for Adults online is self-paced, free course for those living with asthma and their caretakers. The in-person version of ASTHMA Care for Adults is designed for asthma educators to deliver direct AS-ME education to those living with asthma in a group or one-on-one clinical or community setting, or during a home visit. ASTHMA Care should not be confused with the AAFA's professional development courses for respiratory therapists and nurses, Asthma Management Education.</p>	Thank you for your comments.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	<p>AS-ME packages geared toward facilitation for non-licensed educators, such as promotoras and community health workers (CHW), should include a train-the-trainer training conducted by a clinician, certified asthma educator or subject matter expert. CHW organizations are often grassroots non-profits without the means to provide comprehensive disease management and program implementation education.</p>	Thank you for your comments.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	<p>All comprehensive AS-ME education should include motivational interviewing techniques to improve adherence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •If the package is delivered directly to people living with asthma, include open-ended questions and questions to motivate participants to make behavior change •If the package is to teach educators how to facilitate the program, the script should include open ended questions, and preferably a separate section on motivational interviewing concepts and techniques 	Thank you for your review and feedback.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Results	<p>Regarding alternative treatments and navigating different environments, packages should include harm reduction strategies. Not all environments can be made asthma-friendly, so harm reduction is a key component to AS-ME.</p>	Thank you for your comments.

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<p>Deb Brown, American Lung Association (ALA)</p>	<p>Results</p>	<p>The American Lung Association would like to inform the authors about another American Lung Association program not mentioned in the article, called Asthma Basics. The Lung Association launched Asthma Basics in 2015. The American Lung Association's Asthma Basics program is offered as a self-paced online learning module or an in-person workshop and is designed to help people learn more about asthma. The program is ideal for frontline healthcare professionals, such as school nurses or community health workers, as well as individuals with asthma, parents of children with asthma, and co-workers, friends and family who want to learn more about asthma.</p> <p>The Asthma Basics online learning module is available in English and Spanish. Asthma Basics teaches participants to recognize and manage triggers, understand the value of an asthma action plan, and recognize and respond to a breathing emergency.</p> <p>The American Lung Association's <i>Asthma 101™ What You Need to Know</i> is a one-hour program delivered by trained health professionals to school personnel, daycare providers, coaches and parents. Therefore, in Table 3 (page 11), the columns "Audience: Parents, Caregivers" should also be checked in order to reflect the intended audiences of the program. Asthma 101 provided basic information about asthma and its management, such as understanding asthma and steps to take in an emergency. The program is no longer available as a training. Interested parties can download the Asthma 101 workbook free from the American Lung Association website.</p> <p>Asthma Basics and Asthma 101 are similar in format and delivery. Because Asthma 101 is no longer available as a training and the Lung Association uses Asthma Basics to train people with asthma, parents, caregivers, and school personnel, the American Lung Association suggests including a footnote with the first mention of Asthma 101™ as follows:</p> <p><i>Asthma 101™ What You Need to Know</i> is no longer available. For those who are still interested in the content, the Asthma 101 workbook is available to download for free from the American Lung Association website. The American Lung Association instead suggests that stakeholders review its Asthma Basics program.</p>	<p>Thank you for clarifying the status of the Asthma 101 package, and for making us aware of Asthma Basics. We have added a note of clarification, as you suggested, when we first discuss Asthma 101 in the section on Characteristics of AS-ME Packages (Guiding Question 1), at the outset of our Findings.</p>

Commentator & Affiliation	Section	Comment	Response
Tracey Mitchell, EPA	Results	For many existing packages there are no published studies of their effectiveness. This appears to be an opportunity for future research. Only a few programs report outcomes related to trigger remediation. This presents an opportunity to encourage more/better evaluation of an increase in environmental trigger knowledge and action.	We agree that evaluation of many packages is lacking, as is reporting on trigger management. We have identified both of these issues as evidence gaps in Table 10, and included them as recommendations for Next Steps in the Summary and Implications section.
Stanley Szeffler	Results	The findings of this report are well summarized, although some quantitative information on the magnitude of effects observed on key studies would be helpful.	Since this was designed as a Technical Brief, we generally limited the quantitative scope of our analysis, but we agree that further evaluation of effect sizes would be useful for future research.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Discussion and Conclusions	<p>Recommendations for AS-ME program components</p> <p>AAFA recommends that all AS-ME programs include the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre- and post-questionnaires to gauge an increase in knowledge • Questionnaires should incorporate health literacy concepts and can be illustration based • Quality of life questionnaires administered at the start and completion of the intervention, such as the Asthma Control Test • Review of medications and inhalation technique • Checklist to identify indoor and outdoor allergens and triggers, and strategies to address them • The importance of an asthma action plan • An introduction to motivational interviewing techniques to help improve adherence • Follow-up 30, 60 or 90 days after the intervention to determine if lifestyle or behavioral changes were made to improve asthma 	Thank you for your review and feedback.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	Discussion and Conclusions	This report shows that sustained funding is needed beyond one grant cycle to ensure programs can continue to be supported. Conducting a deeper dive into how programs remain funded would be useful, especially when the report suggests investing in technology platforms to deliver AS-ME. The expense of investing in and maintaining technology and updating and implementing curricula is often a barrier for organizations who rely on grant funding. Not having sustained funding keeps programs from mid- to long-term implementation, which means very little outcome data. This also creates a one-off projects.	We agree that funding is critical for developing and sustaining AS-ME. We recommend that policymakers prioritize funding as a Next Step in the Summary and Implications section.

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Lorene Alba, AAFA	Discussion and Conclusions	<p>Guiding Question 4: Next Steps Next steps should include evaluation planning of these packages, and dissemination of the evaluation data.</p> <p>Sustained funding of AS-ME programs is essential to the success of these programs. AAFA's Power Breathing program geared towards teens was discontinued due to lack of financial support to maintain the program.</p>	We have included these issues in the recommendations that we offer as Next Steps in the Summary and Implications section.
Tracey Mitchell, EPA	Discussion and Conclusions	EPA's Asthma Program supports the following next steps. We envision utilizing www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org and our other initiatives to advance this work. 1.Increasing the study of home-based, community-based and self-directed packages; 2.Expanding the availability of materials by reducing or eliminating barriers to access; 3.Developing methods to more effectively assess and report medication use and trigger avoidance; 4.Promoting training for asthma educators and other instructional facilitators by exploring payment models to reimburse their services.	Thank you for your review and feedback.
Stanley Szeffler	Discussion and Conclusions	The summary reviews the major findings and points out the need for further studies. Also, the type of studies needed are reasonable. Unfortunately, support for such studies are limited.	Thank you for your review and feedback.
Public Reviewer #5	Discussion and Conclusions	Very helpful information came out of this section along with areas to further study to improve care to individuals with Asthma	Thank you for your comments.
Stanley Szeffler	Appendix	The appendix section provides more details on the studies. More detail for the individual studies is presented in this area.	Thank you for your comments.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	General	The references are an important part of the brief.	Thank you for your comments.
Lorene Alba, AAFA	General	The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) is pleased to have the opportunity to review the technical brief, Characteristics of Existing Asthma Self-Management Education Packages. Having several packages outlined and reviewed in this report is extremely helpful to identify the current gaps, overlap and opportunities in current AS-ME programs. AAFA appreciates all of the work that has gone into creating this technical brief. When finalized we hope it will be distributed widely. We are available to discuss the findings and next steps.	Thank you for your review and feedback, and for AAFA's dedication to improving asthma care.
Deb Brown, ALA	General	We greatly appreciate AHRQ's focus on self-management education, a very important component of care for patients with asthma, and we think that <i>Characteristics of Existing Asthma Self-Management Education Packages</i> will be a very helpful tool for stakeholders interested in this topic.	Thank you for your review and feedback, and for ALA's commitment to helping patients with asthma.
Tracey Mitchell, EPA	General	Thank you for this helpful and informative report. EPA is committed to continuing to support the use of asthma education materials that teach about environmental trigger identification, remediation and prevention as a key component of comprehensive asthma management.	Thank you for your comments, and for EPA's commitment to promoting health and wellbeing.

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Stanley Szefler	General	The references appear to be complete. I can not think of any that are missing.	Thank you for your comments.
Stanley Szefler	General	Overall, this evaluation is well done and provide important information for consideration of future studies. It should be a useful document for inclusion in future guideline revisions.	Thank you for your review and feedback.

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