

# Co-morbidities in Uncontrolled Asthma: Challenges and Solutions

---

서울아산병원 호흡기내과 이장호

# CONTENTS

---

INTRODUCTION

COMORBIDITIES

- Obesity
- Obstructive sleep apnea
- GERD
- Allergic rhinitis and chronic rhinosinusitis with/without nasal polyposis
- Psychiatric comorbidities

# Asthma treatment

---

## Treatment Goal

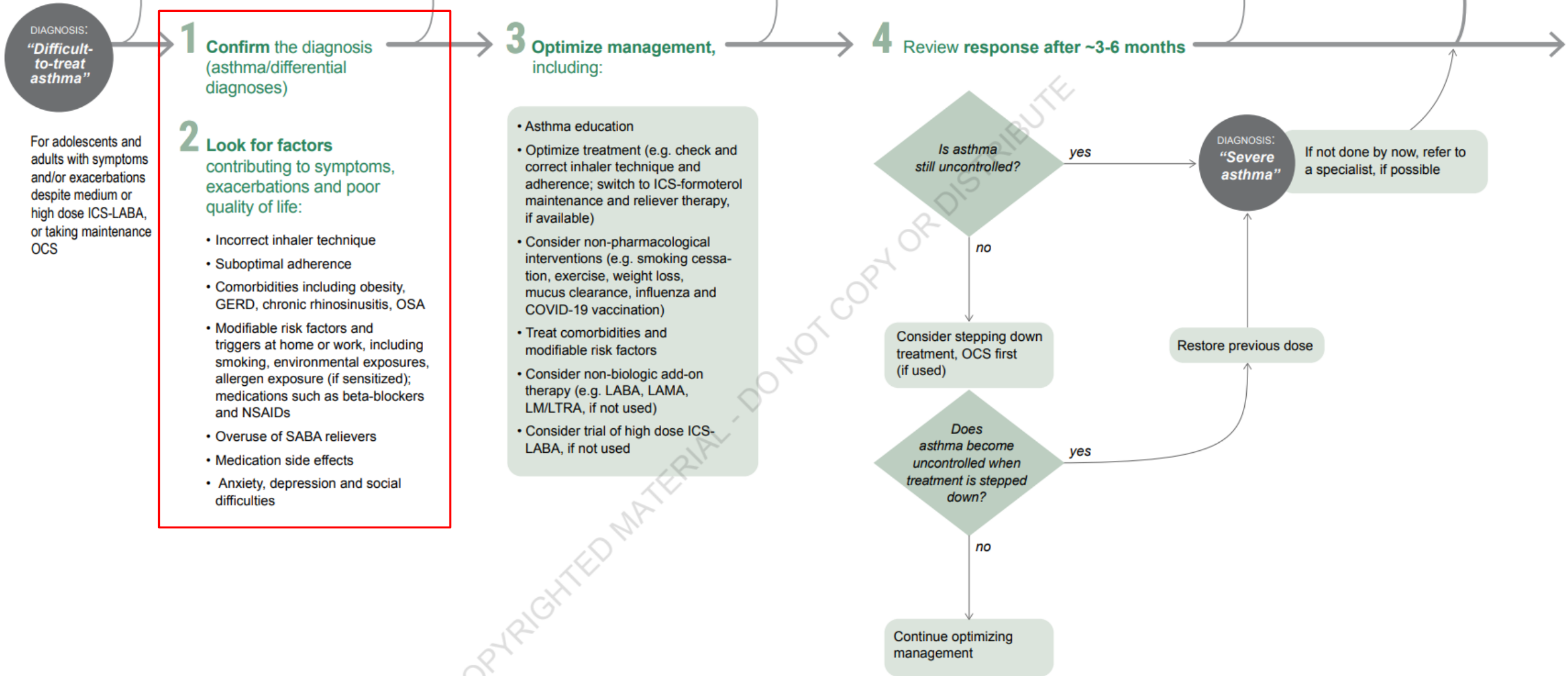
- Reducing impairment (symptoms and activities), achieving normal pulmonary function test values
- Minimizing risks associated with the disease

## Difficult-to-treat asthma

- Asthma is **uncontrolled** despite prescribing of **medium or high-dose ICS with another controller (LABA)**, or **maintenance OCS**, or is **required high-dose ICS-LABA treatment** to maintain good symptom control and prevent exacerbation.

# Investigate and manage difficult-to-treat asthma in adults and adolescents

Consider referring to specialist or severe asthma clinic at any stage

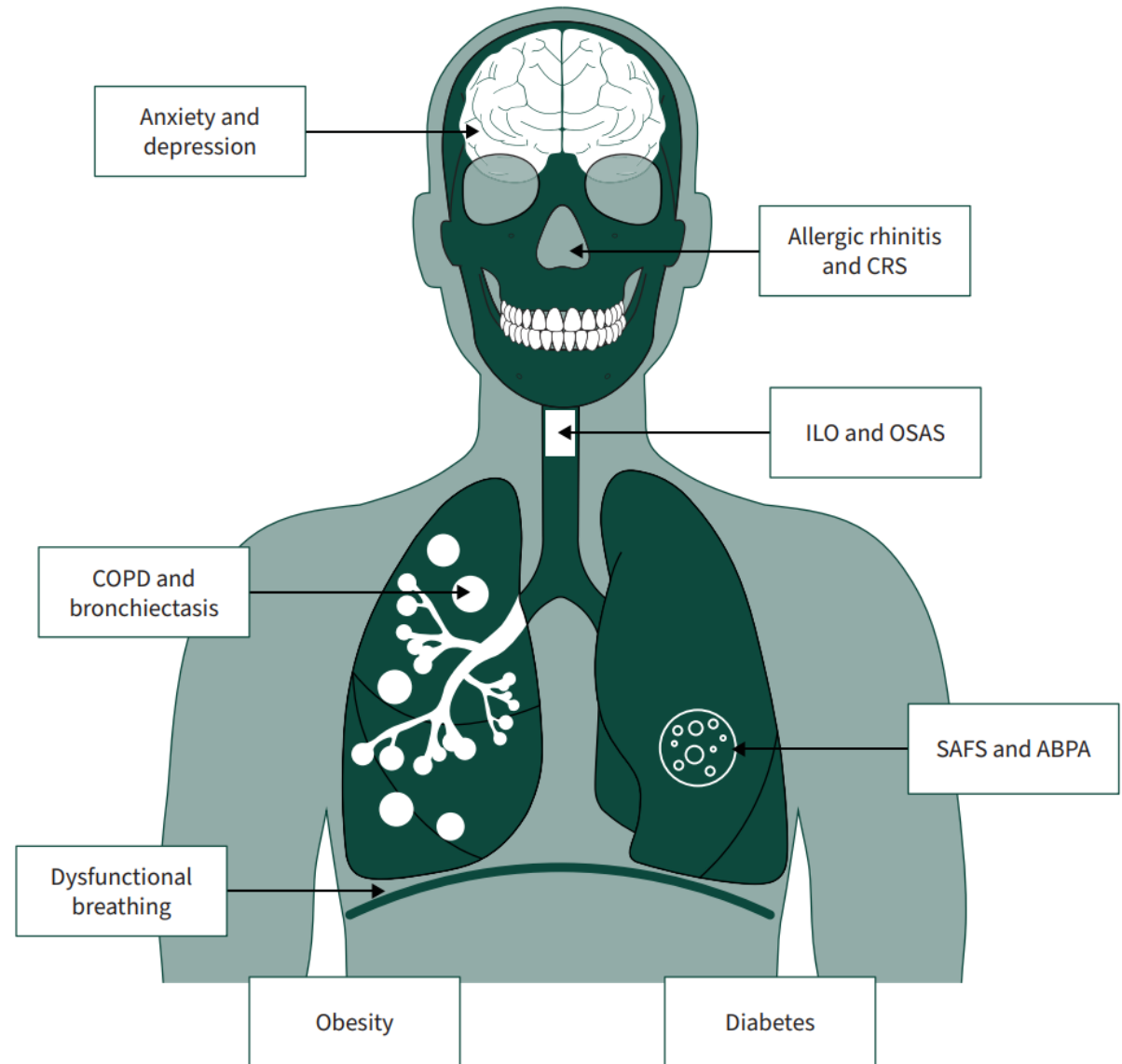


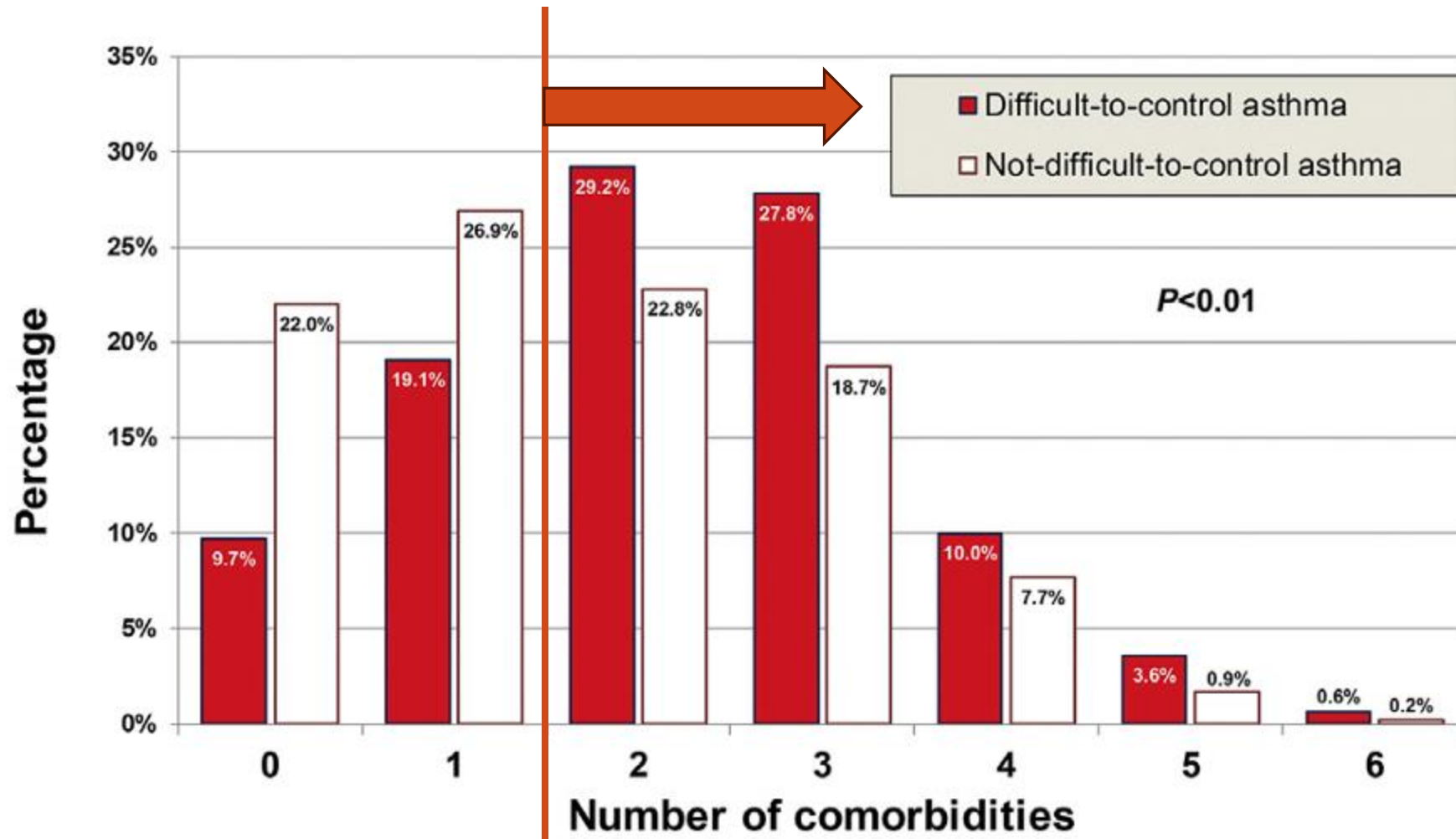
**1** **Confirm the diagnosis**  
(asthma/differential diagnoses)

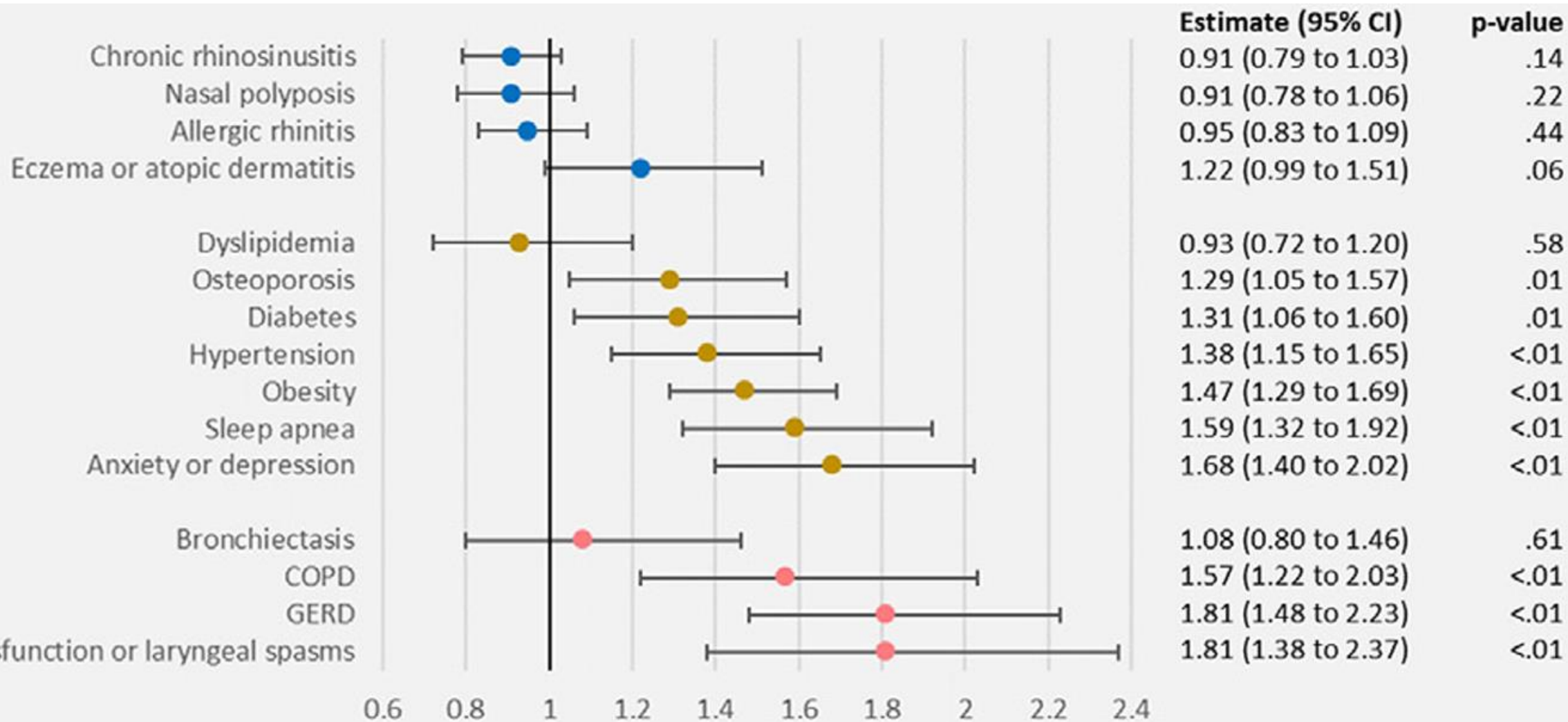
**2** **Look for factors**  
contributing to symptoms,  
exacerbations and poor  
quality of life:

- Incorrect inhaler technique
- Suboptimal adherence
- Comorbidities including obesity, GERD, chronic rhinosinusitis, OSA
- Modifiable risk factors and triggers at home or work, including smoking, environmental exposures, allergen exposure (if sensitized); medications such as beta-blockers and NSAIDs
- Overuse of SABA relievers
- Medication side effects
- Anxiety, depression and social difficulties

# Common comorbidities encountered in difficult and severe asthma







Odds ratios for having uncontrolled asthma, adjusted for country, age at enrolment, and sex

# How do comorbidities influence the severity of asthma

---

Act as **confounding factors** in the diagnosis or assessment of control

Responsible for the development, or an evolution towards, **a different asthma phenotype**

Part of **the same pathophysiological process**

Associated with a specific exposure or condition  
that can **modulate the clinical expression** of asthma  
or **affect the efficacy of or compliance** to treatment

# Confounding factors mimicking asthma

---

## Dyspnea

- COPD, obesity, cardiac disease, deconditioning, panic attack

## Cough

- Inducible laryngeal obstruction, upper airway cough syndrome, GERD, Bronchiectasis, ACE inhibitor

## Wheeze

- Obesity, COPD, tracheobronchomalacia, Inducible laryngeal obstruction

**In a case study where difficult-to-treat adult asthma patients were systemically assessed, 12-50% of the patients were judged to have a diagnosis other than asthma**

# Comorbidities

---

# Obesity

---

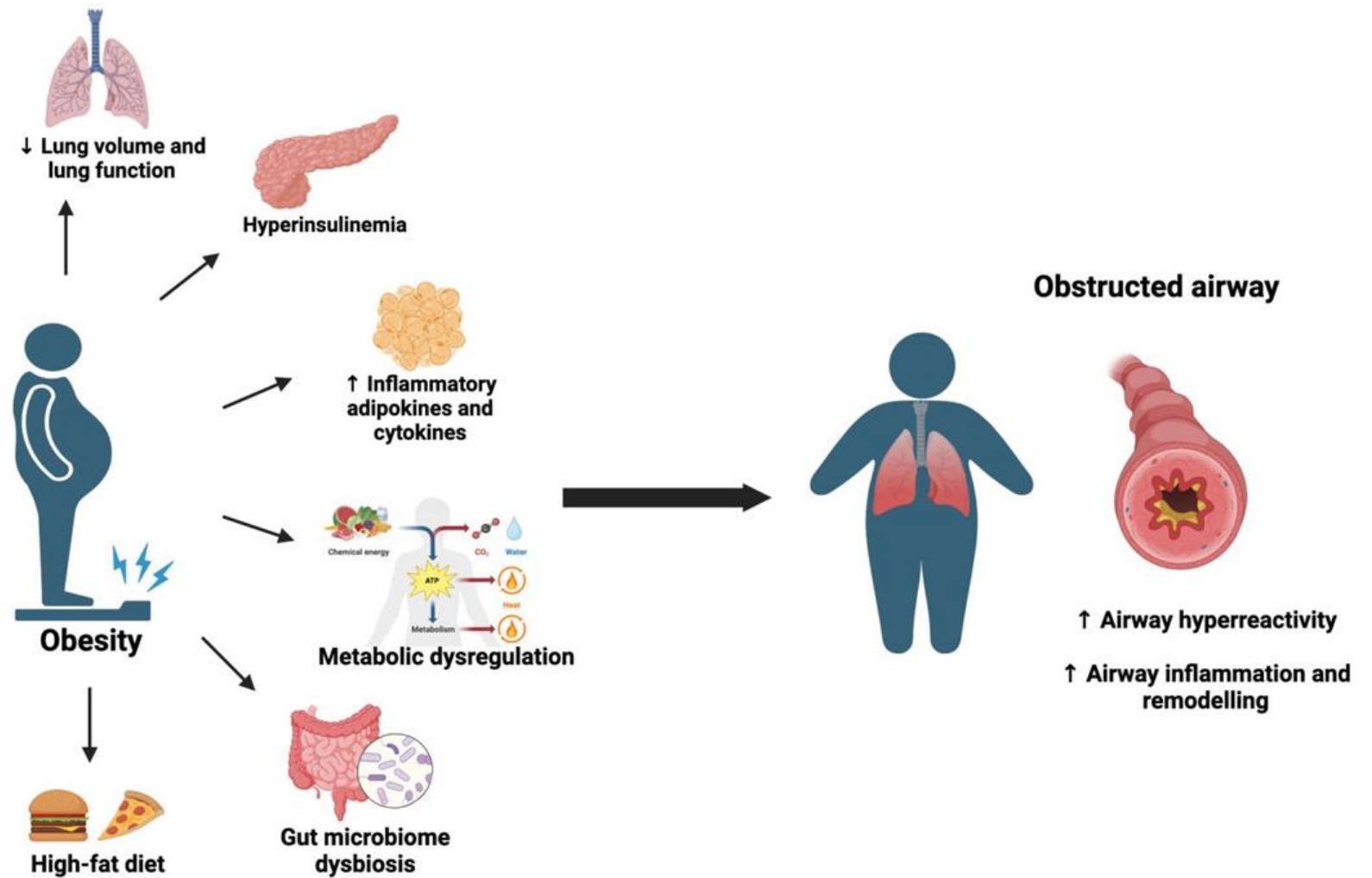
Obesity is highly prevalent in patients with severe asthma

- 52.1% in adolescent and 62.7% in adults

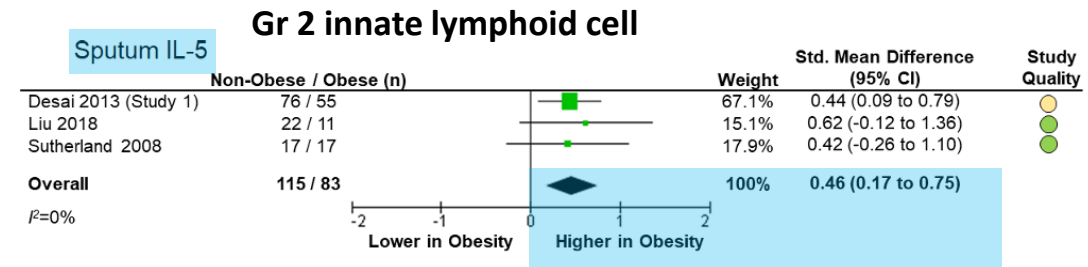
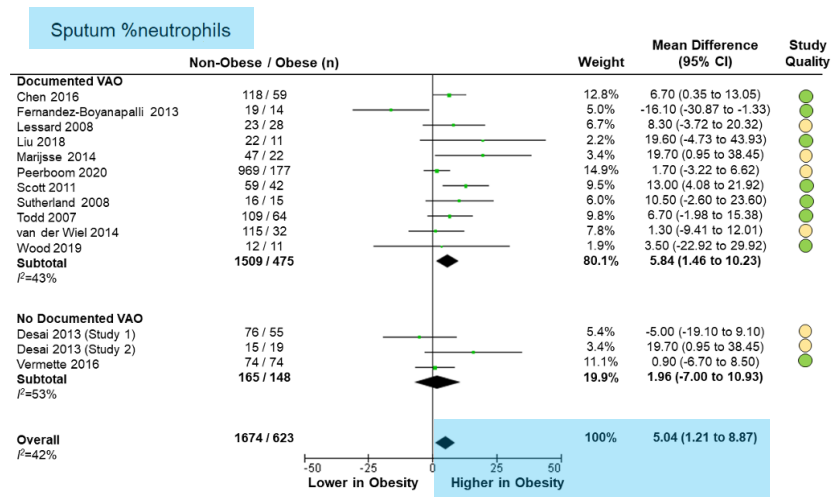
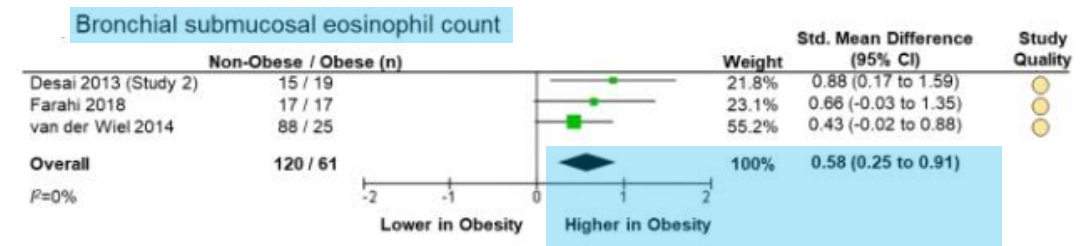
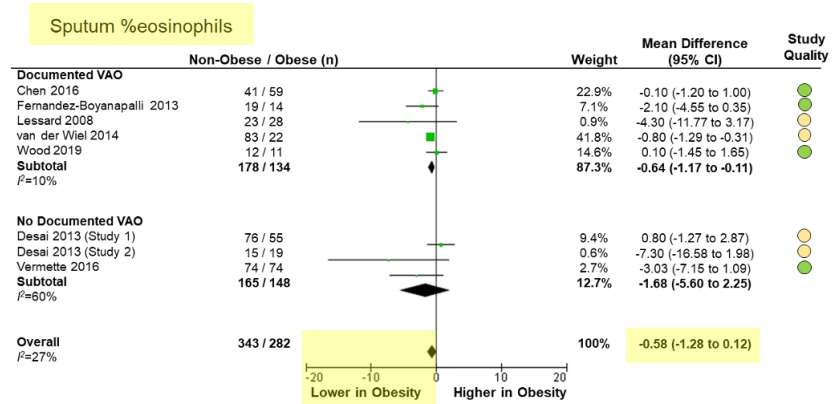
## Mechanisms

- Obesity leads to a different type of airway inflammation (Non-type2 inflammation)
- Lack of fitness
- Reduction in lung volume
- Difficulties in diagnosis

# Obesity-associated non-T2 mechanisms

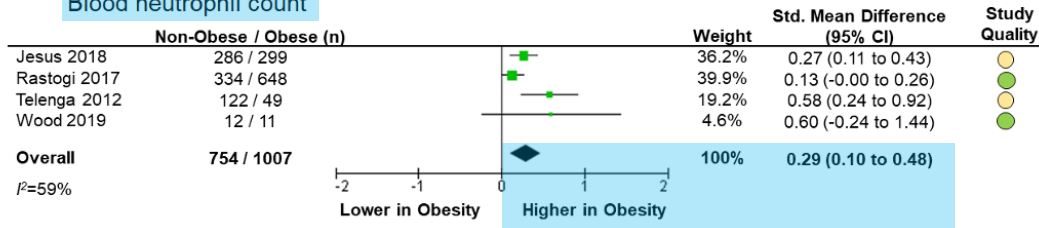


# Effect of obesity on airway and systemic inflammation

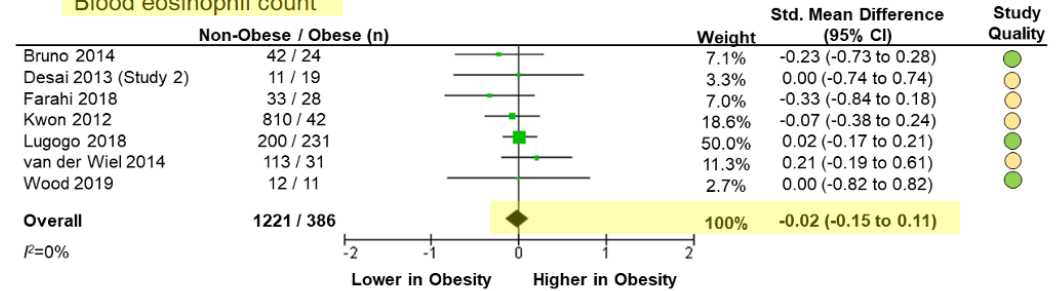


# Effect of obesity on airway and systemic inflammation

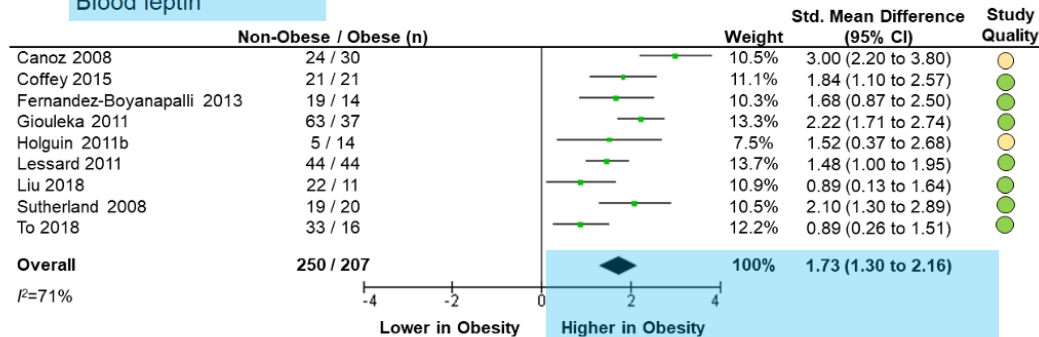
## Blood neutrophil count



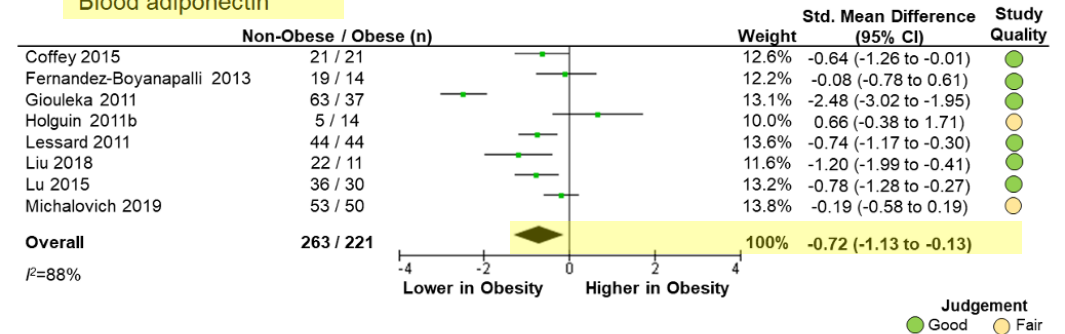
## Blood eosinophil count



## Blood leptin

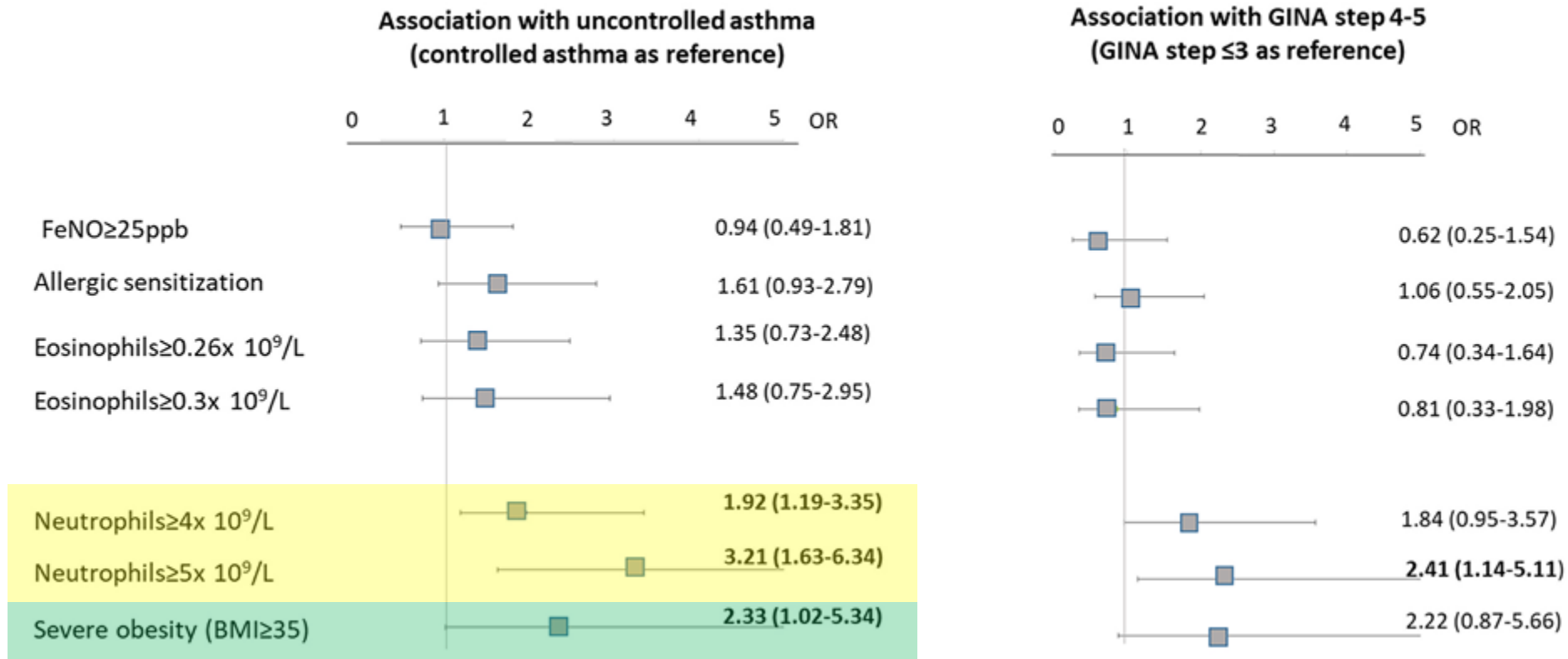


## Blood adiponectin



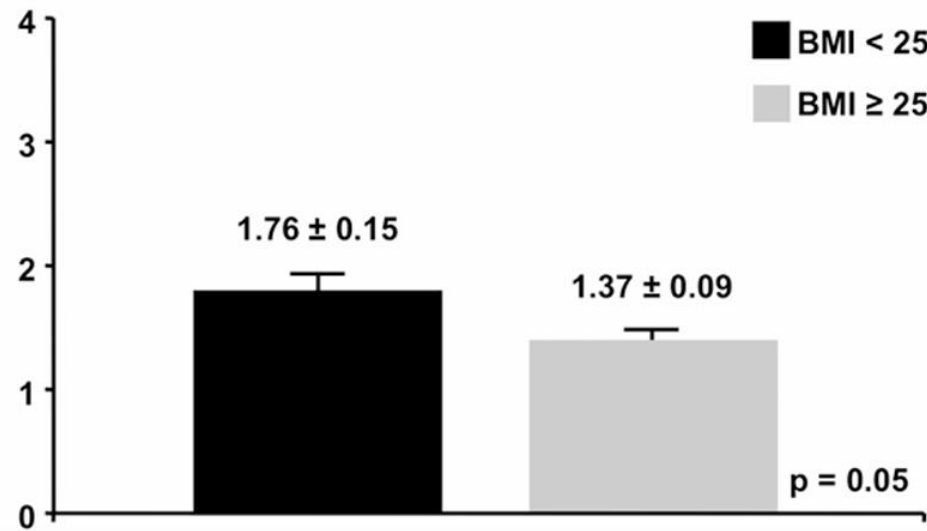
Judgement  
● Good ● Fair

# Obesity associated with uncontrolled asthma

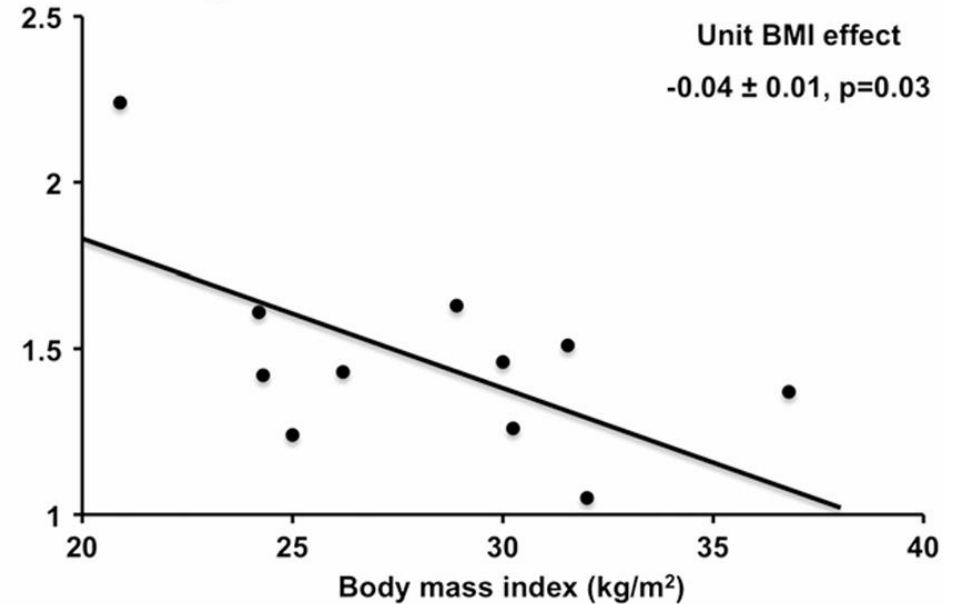


# Body mass and glucocorticoid response in asthma

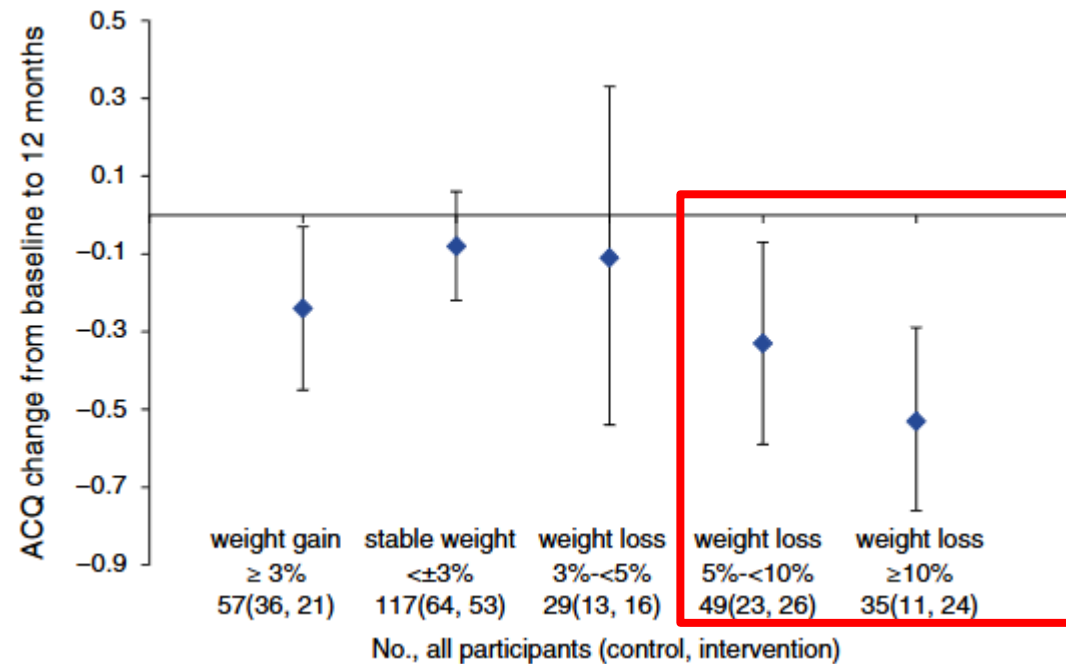
BAL MKP-1 fold-change



BAL MKP-1 fold-change

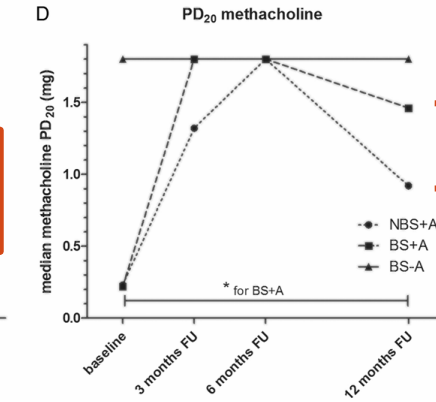
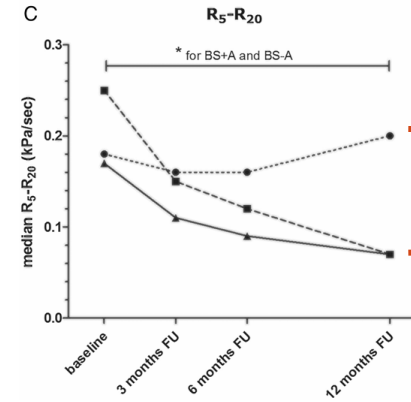
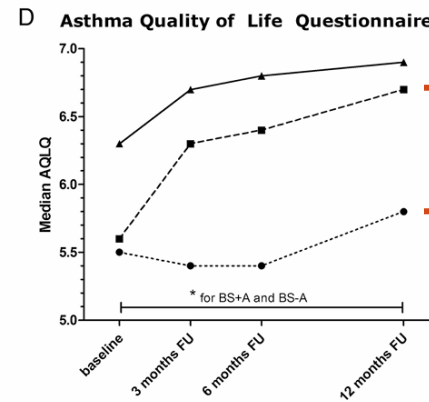
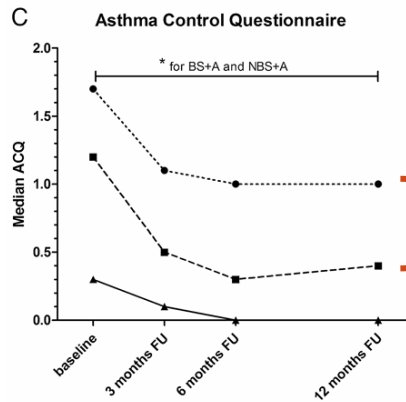
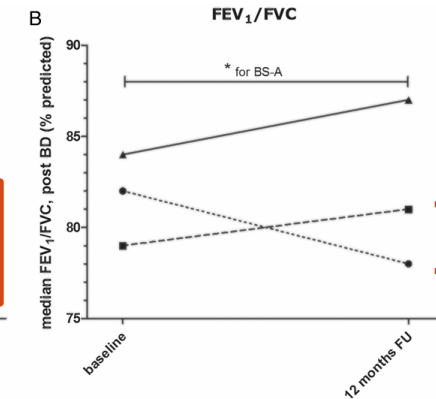
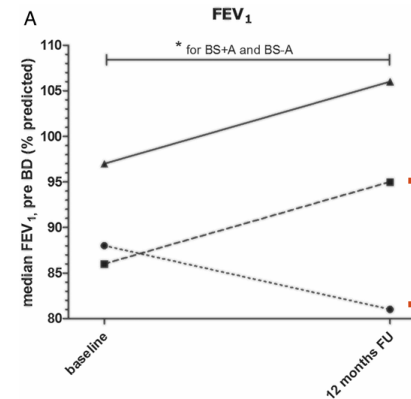
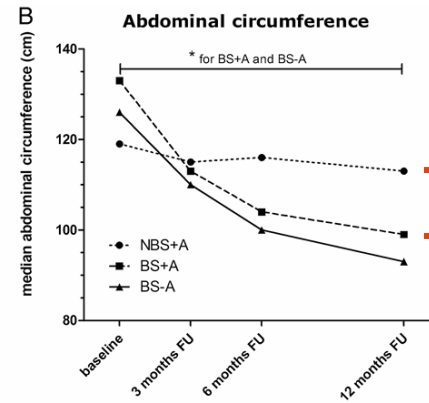
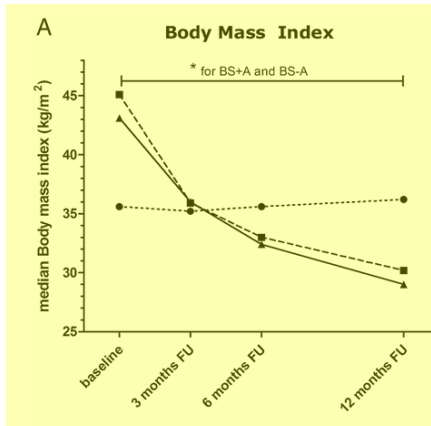


# Correlation between change in ACQ scores and weight change

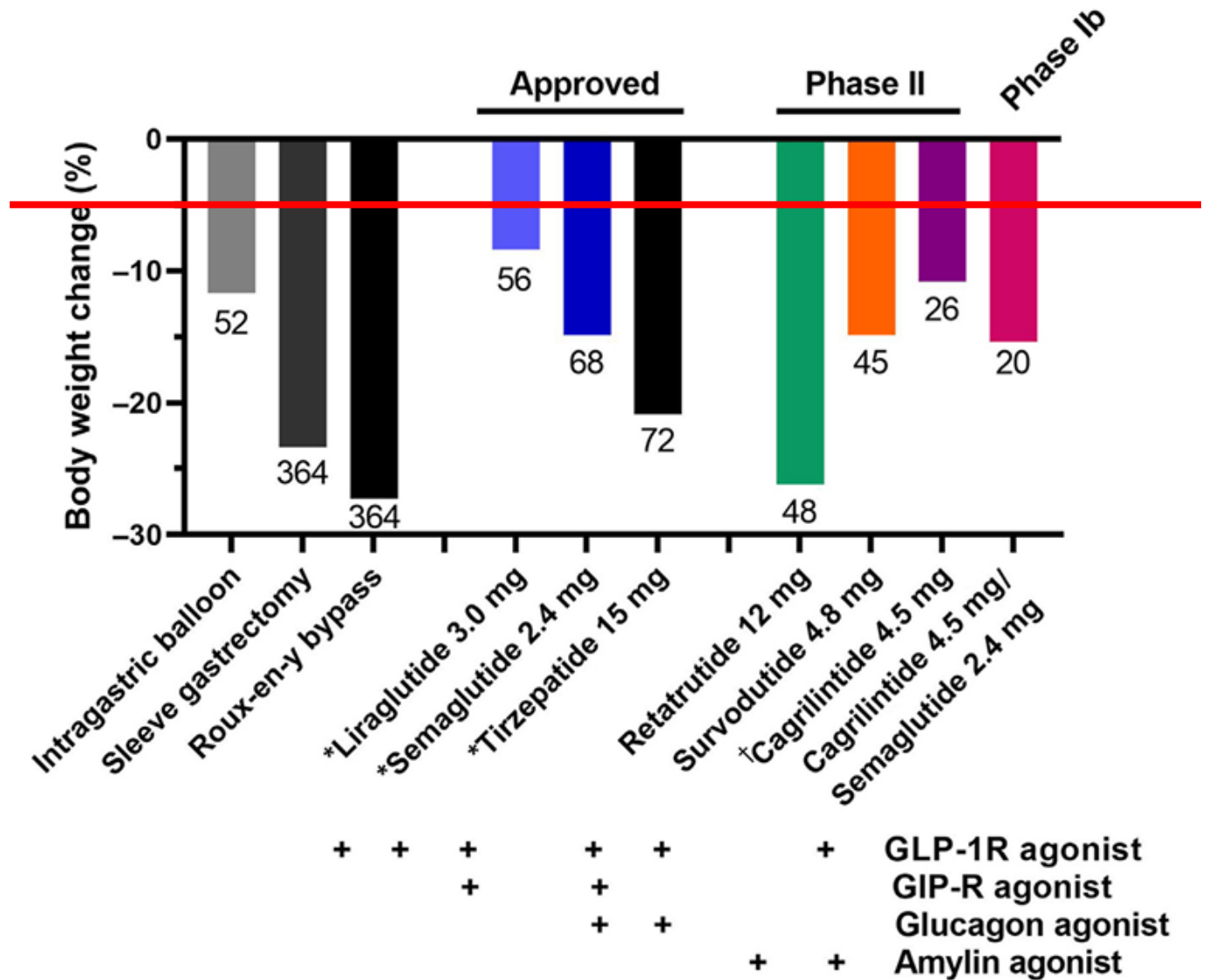


# Effect of bariatric surgery on asthma

- NBS+A
- BS+A
- ▲- BS-A



# Body weight change across surgical and new pharmacologic options



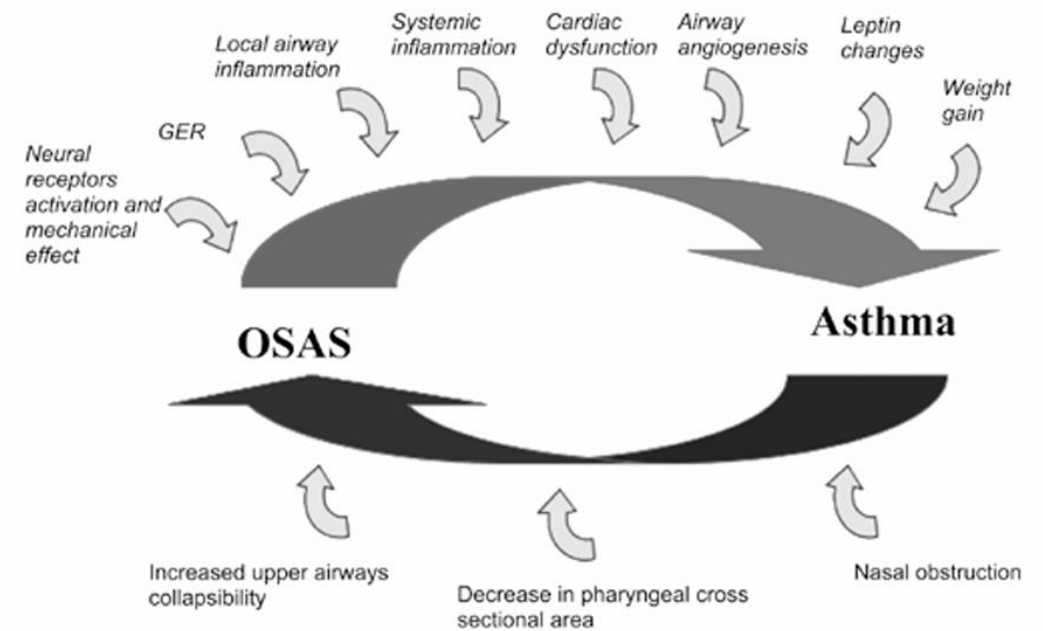
# Obstructive sleep apnea

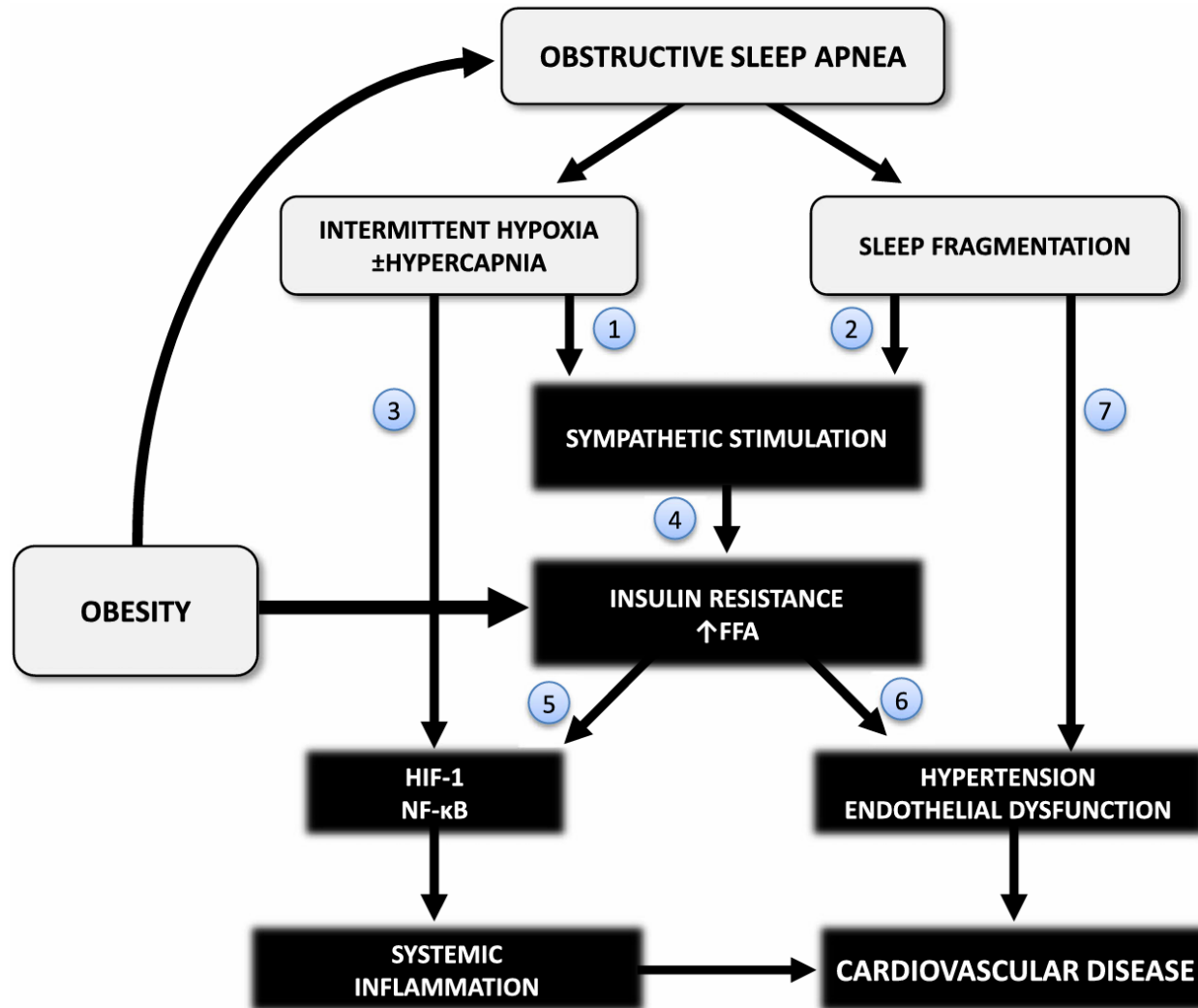
OSA is common in asthma populations, more in severe asthma cohorts

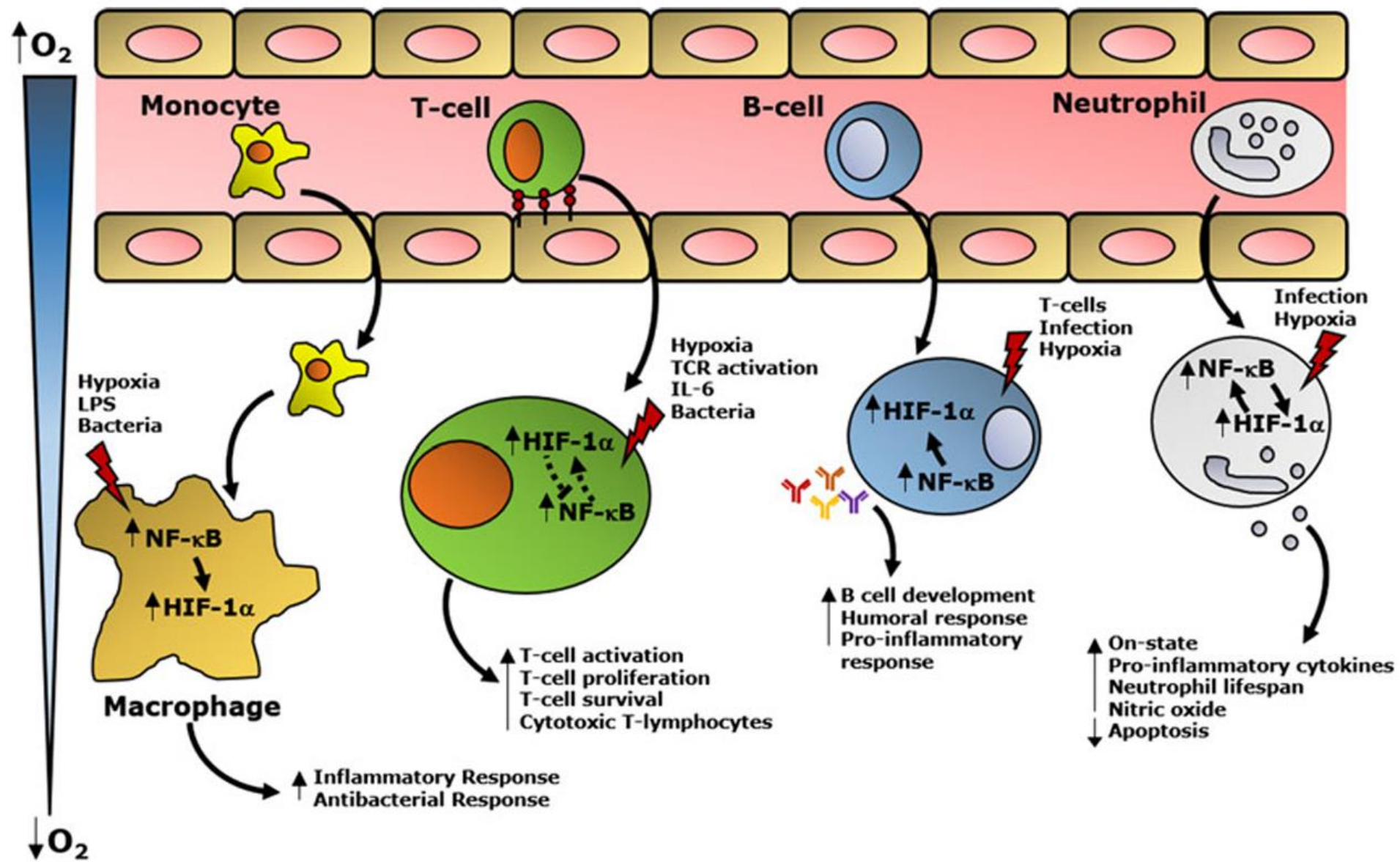
- Estimates of prevalence between 30 – 90%

OSA is associated with

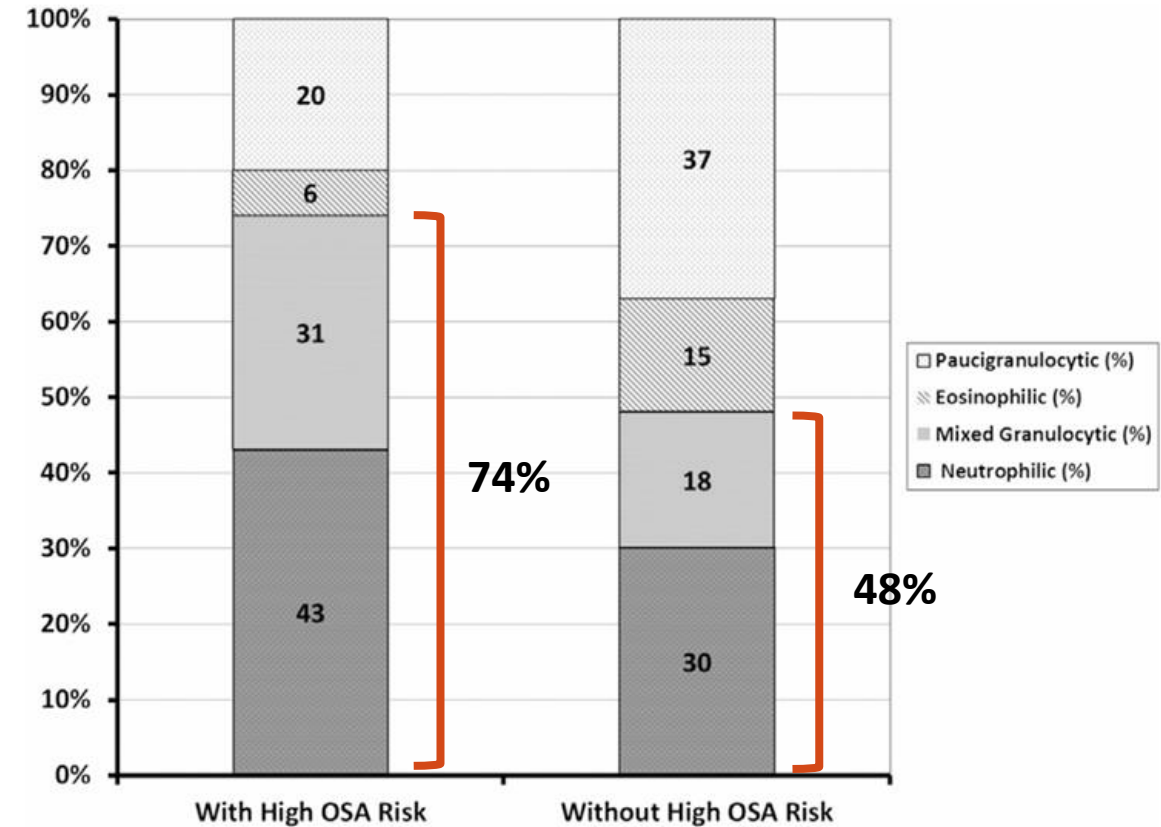
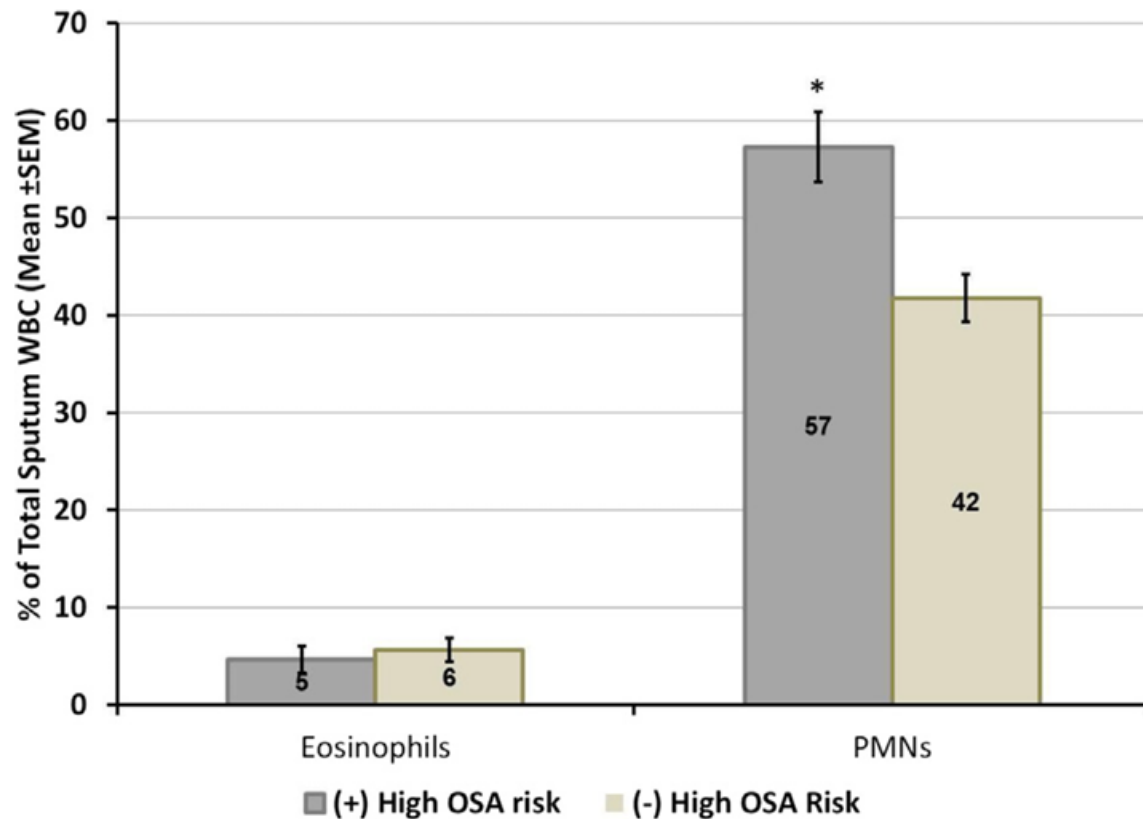
- ↑ hospital readmission, exacerbation, reliever use
- ↓ symptoms







# Neutrophilic airway inflammation in OSA



# Impact of CPAP on Asthma

---

	Pre CPAP	Post CPAP
FEV <sub>1</sub> % predicted	82.2 ± 13.6	80.4 ± 13.6
FEV <sub>1</sub> /FVC %	77.3 ± 8.3	76.3 ± 10.1
PC <sub>20</sub> mg*mL <sup>-1</sup>	2.2 (1.3-3.5)	2.5 (1.4-4.5)
AHI	48.1 ± 23.6	2.6 ± 2.5
QOLAs	5.0 ± 1.2	5.8 ± 0.9
QOLAp	4.1 ± 1.4	6.0 ± 1.0

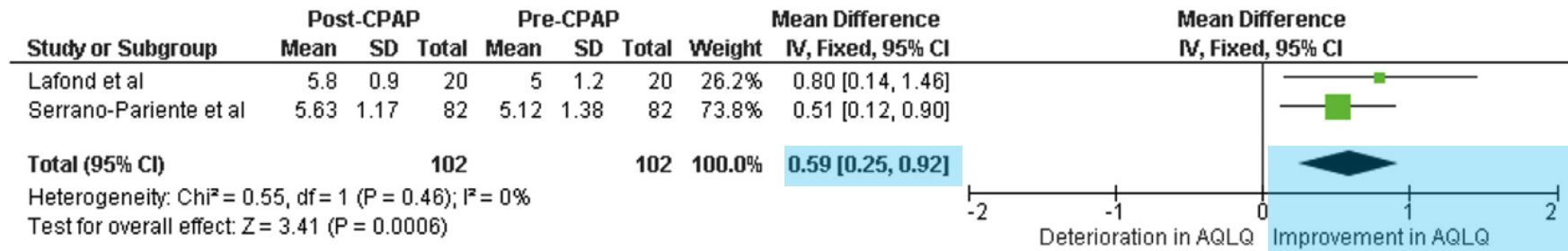
# Impact of CPAP on Asthma

---

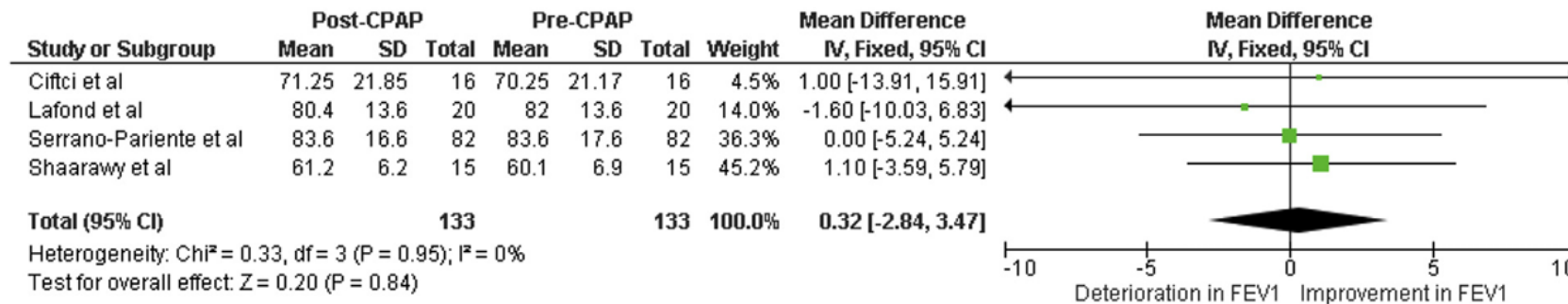
	Pre CPAP	Post CPAP
FEV <sub>1</sub> % predicted	82.2 ± 13.6	80.4 ± 13.6
FEV <sub>1</sub> /FVC %	77.3 ± 8.3	76.3 ± 10.1
PC <sub>20</sub> mg*mL <sup>-1</sup>	2.2 (1.3-3.5)	2.5 (1.4-4.5)
AHI	48.1 ± 23.6	2.6 ± 2.5
QOLAs	5.0 ± 1.2	5.8 ± 0.9
QOLAp	4.1 ± 1.4	6.0 ± 1.0

# Clinical Outcomes pre and post CPAP

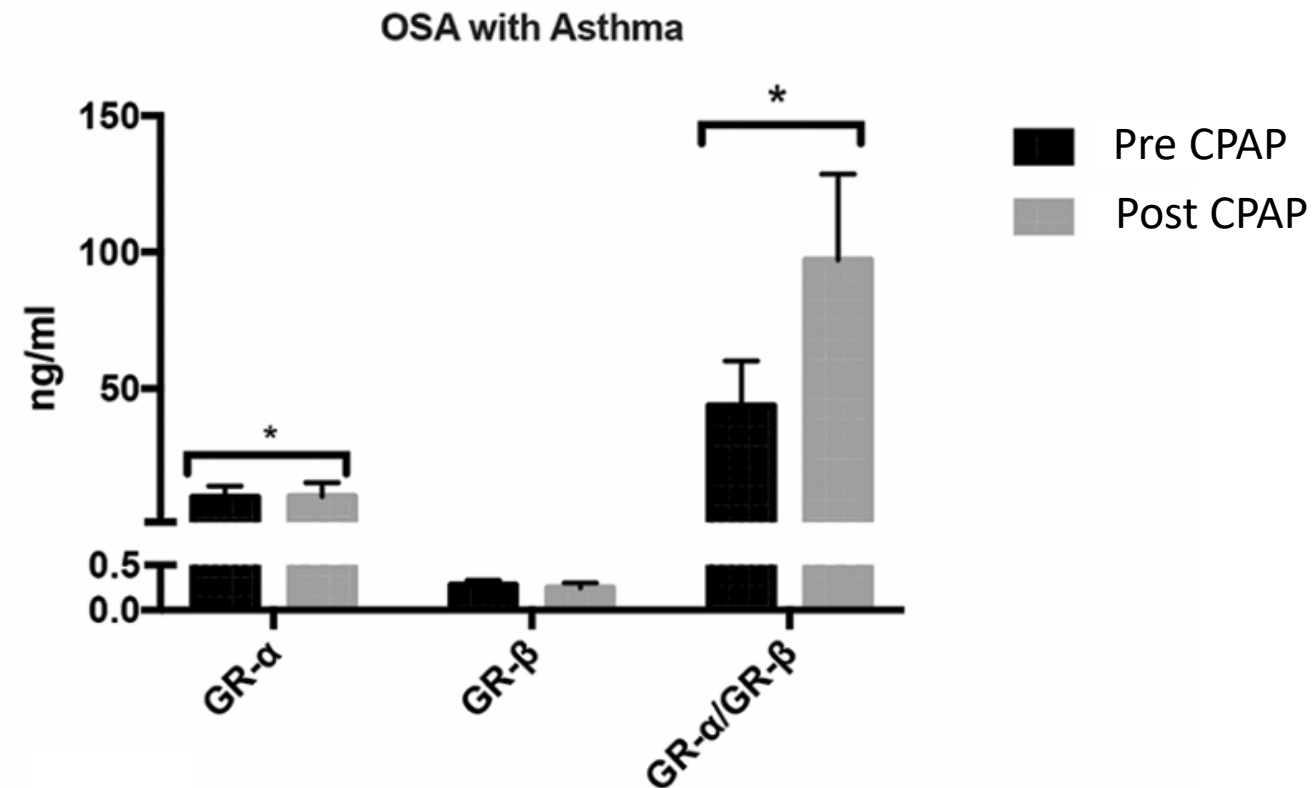
## Asthma related quality of life (AQLQ/mini-AQLQ)



## Lung Function (FEV1% predicted)



# Glucocorticoid responsiveness in OSA with asthma



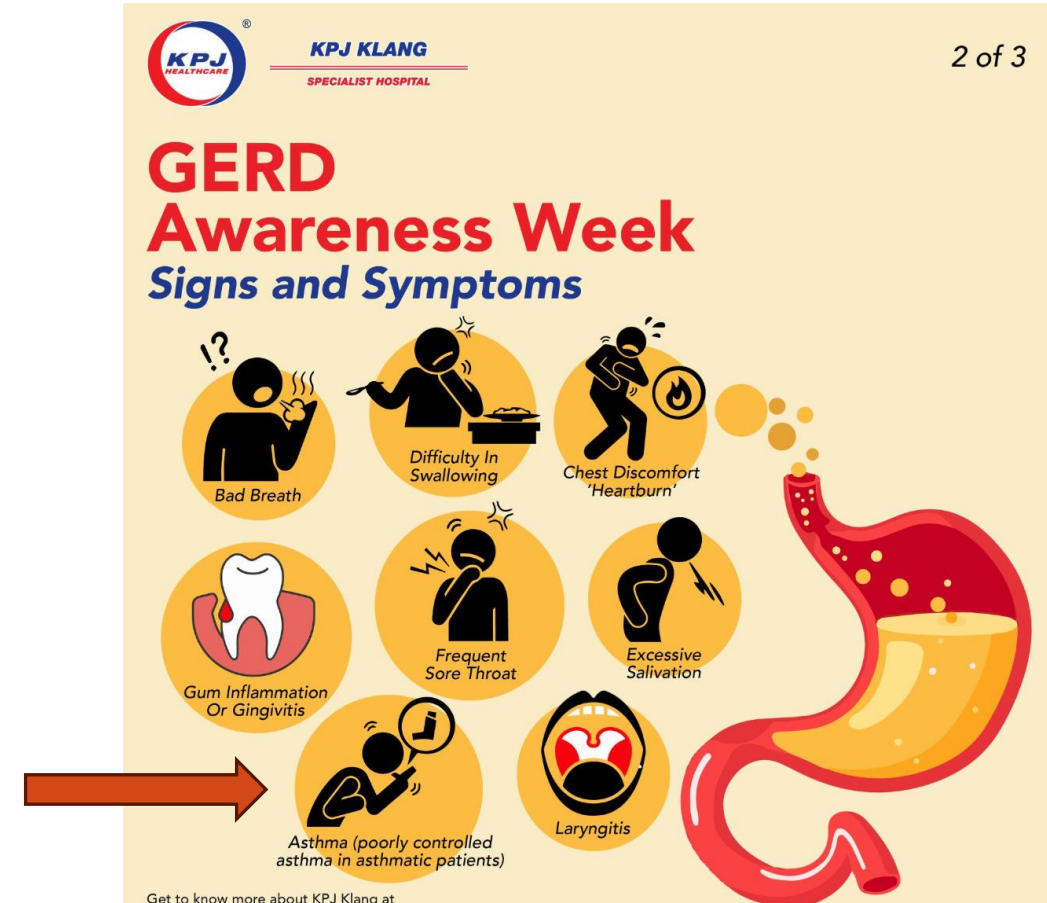
# Gastroesophageal reflux disease

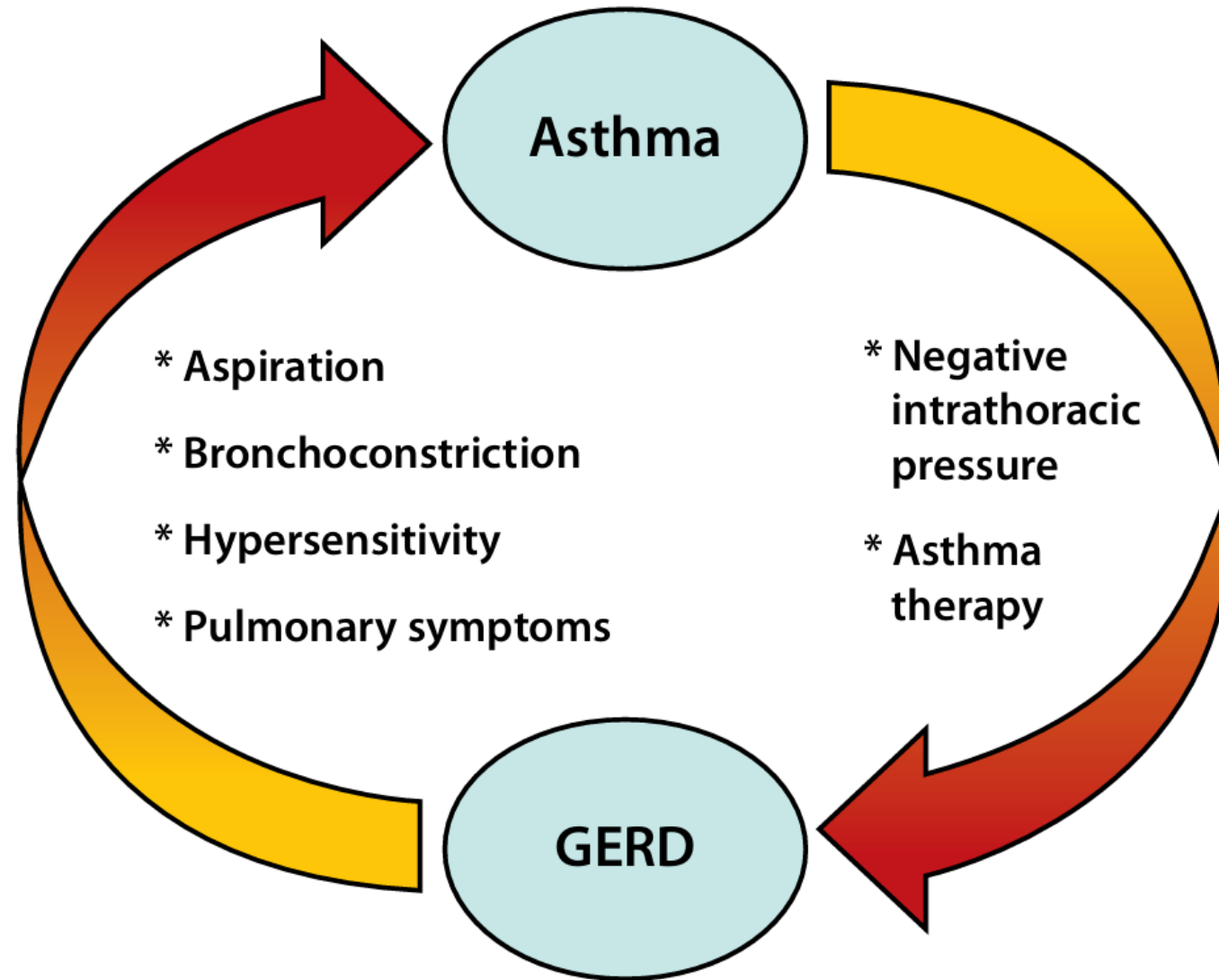
GERD is prevalent in patients with asthma

- 59.2% vs. 38.1% in non-asthma group

GERD is associated with

- Increased exacerbation and hospitalization





# GERD medication effects on the asthma

---



## Pharmacological and surgical interventions for the treatment of gastro-oesophageal reflux in adults and children with asthma (Review)

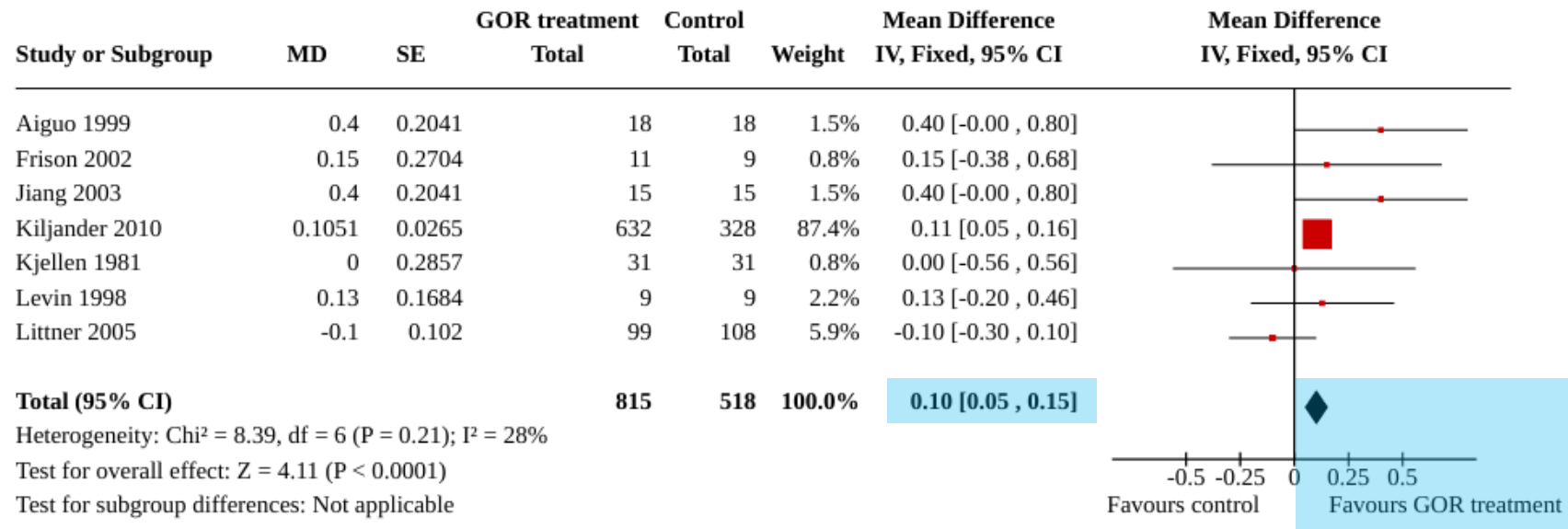
Kopsaftis Z, Yap HS, Tin KS, Hnin K, Carson-Chahhoud KV

Formal diagnosis of GERD based on symptoms (>70%) or objective measurements such as 24-hour pH manometry or EGD.

GERD pharmacologic treatment: Antacids, PPI, H2 blocker and prokinetics.

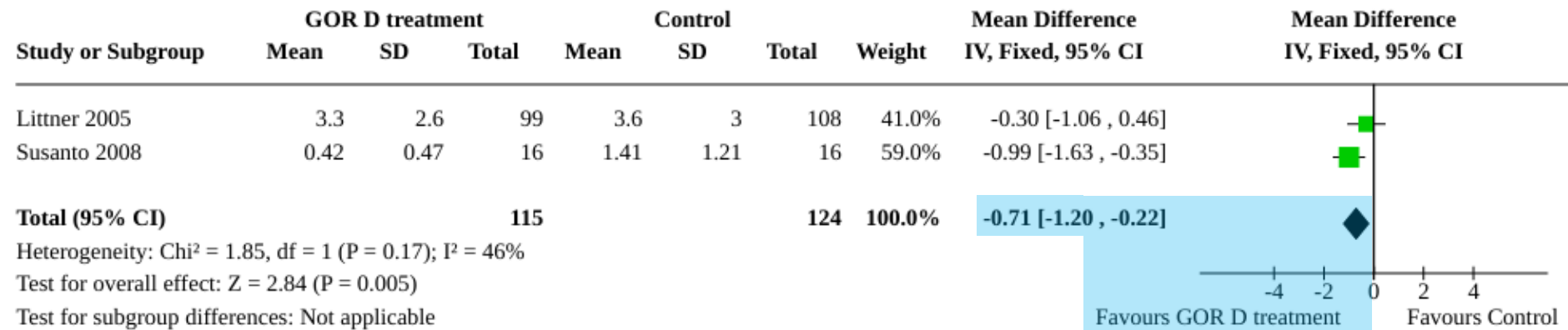
# GERD medication effects on the asthma

**Analysis 1.2. Comparison 1: Medical intervention for gastro-oesophageal reflux compared to nil intervention, delayed intervention control, or placebo for asthma in adults and children, Outcome 2: Change in FEV<sub>1</sub> (L)**



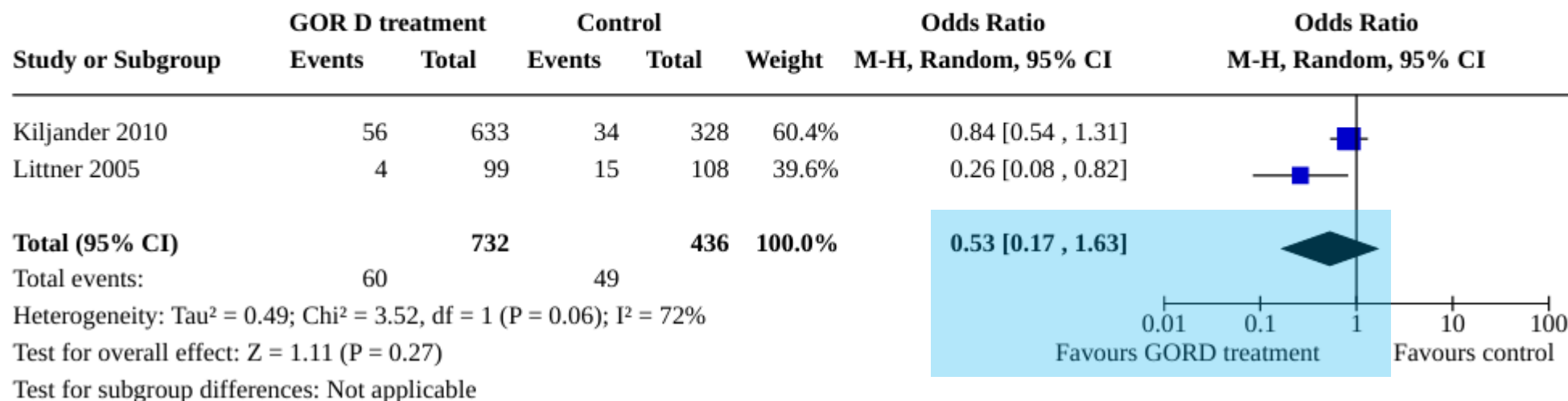
# GERD medication effects on the asthma

**Analysis 1.4. Comparison 1: Medical intervention for gastro-oesophageal reflux compared to nil intervention, delayed intervention control, or placebo for asthma in adults and children, Outcome 4: Use of "rescue" medications and emergency action plans: B2 use puffs per day**



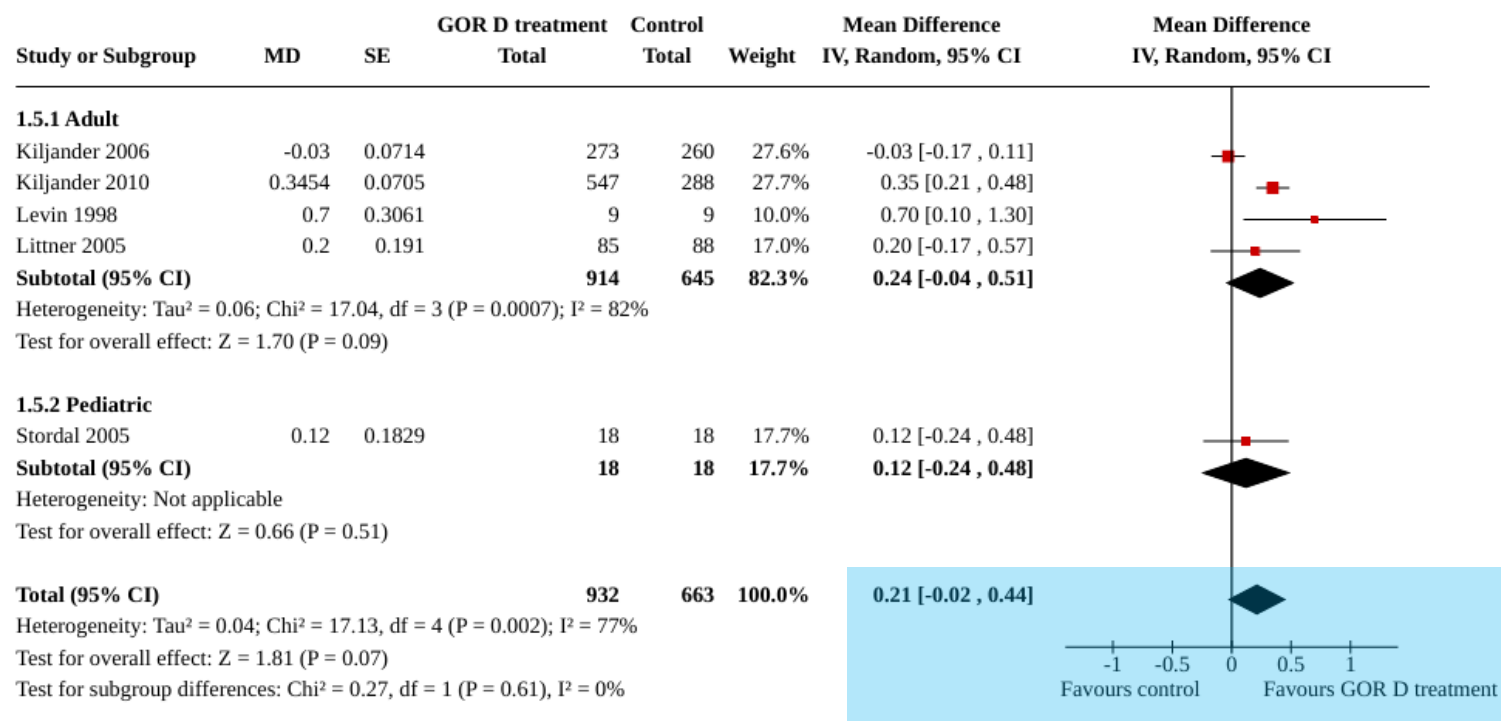
# GERD medication effects on the asthma

**Analysis 1.1. Comparison 1: Medical intervention for gastro-oesophageal reflux compared to nil intervention, delayed intervention control, or placebo for asthma in adults and children, Outcome 1: Number of participants with any moderate/severe acute exacerbations**



# GERD medication effects on the asthma

## Analysis 1.5. Comparison 1: Medical intervention for gastro-oesophageal reflux compared to nil intervention, delayed intervention control, or placebo for asthma in adults and children, Outcome 5: Change in AQLQ



# Efficacy of Esomeprazole for Treatment of Poorly Controlled Asthma

The American Lung Association Asthma Clinical Research Centers\*

## Adequate patients

Inadequately controlled asthma despite therapy with moderate or high doses of ICS with minimal or no GERD symptoms.

## Exclusion criteria

Smoking history within the previous 6 months or more than 10 pack-years

FEV1 < 50% of predicted value

Surgery for reflux or peptic ulcer

Clinical indications for acid-suppression treatment

History of antireflux medication within the previous month

Esomeprazole 40mg bid vs. placebo

Variable	Placebo (N=193)	Esomeprazole (N=200)	Incidence- Rate Ratio, Esomeprazole vs. Placebo (95% CI)	P Value	
				Esomeprazole vs. Placebo†	Gastroesophageal- Reflux Interaction‡
Asthma episodes, according to definition that did not include use of beta-agonists as a criterion					
No. of events	201	224			
No. of events/person-yr	2.3	2.5	1.1 (0.8–1.5)	0.66	0.93
Patients with ≥1 event (%)	42	42			
Exacerbation components					
≥30% drop in peak expiratory flow on 2 consecutive days					
No. of events	141	180			
No. of events/person-yr	1.7	2.1	1.2 (0.8–2.0)	0.35	0.99
Patients with ≥1 event (%)	26	28			
Urgent care visit					
No. of events	53	51			
No. of events/person-yr	0.6	0.6	0.9 (0.6–1.5)	0.79	0.44
Patients with ≥1 event (%)	17	18			
New use of oral corticosteroids					
No. of events	50	48			
No. of events/person-yr	0.6	0.5	0.9 (0.6–1.3)	0.62	0.85
Patients with ≥1 event (%)	24	21			
Asthma episodes, according to definition that included increased use of beta-agonists					
No. of events	367	383			
No. of events/person-yr	4.4	4.3	1.0 (0.8–1.3)	0.87	0.19
Patients with ≥1 event (%)	63	60			
Use of rescue medications					
No. of events	248	241			
No. of events/person-yr	3.0	2.8	0.9 (0.7–1.3)	0.62	0.05
Patients with ≥1 event (%)	46	45			
Night awakening					
No. of events	2518	2409			
No. of events/person-yr	30	28	0.9 (0.6–1.4)	0.70	0.31
Patients with ≥1 event (%)	55	52			

# Allergic rhinitis, Chronic rhinosinusitis and nasal polyposis

---

AR & CRS with nasal polyposis is common in asthma populations, more in severe asthma cohorts

- Prevalence in severe asthma
  - Allergic rhinitis: 55 ~ 68%
  - CRS with/without nasal polyposis: 45 ~ 50%

Uncontrolled AR & CRS were related to

- More asthma exacerbations in severe asthma
- Lower asthma-related quality of life
- Poorer control

## WHAT IS RHINITIS?

**Inflammation of the nasal mucous membranes.**

**Symptoms:**

- Nasal obstruction
- Nasal discharge
- Sneezing



*Can be allergic or non-allergic*

**Intranasal corticosteroid**

## WHAT IS CHRONIC RHINOSINUSITIS (CRS)?

**Persistent inflammation in the nose & sinuses (>3 months)**

**Symptoms:**

- Nasal obstruction
- Nasal discharge
- Facial pain/pressure
- Loss of smell
- May include polyposis



**Intranasal corticosteroid  
Intranasal saline irrigation  
Oral antibiotics  
Endoscopic sinus surgery**

# Allergic rhinitis, Chronic rhinosinusitis and nasal polyposis

---

AR & CRS with nasal polyposis is common in asthma populations, more in severe asthma cohorts

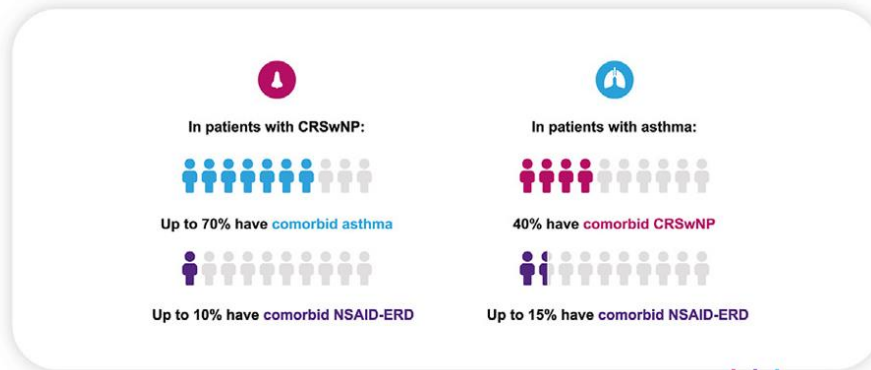
- Prevalence in severe asthma
  - Allergic rhinitis: 55 ~ 68%
  - CRS with/without nasal polyposis: 45 ~ 50%

Uncontrolled AR & CRS were related to

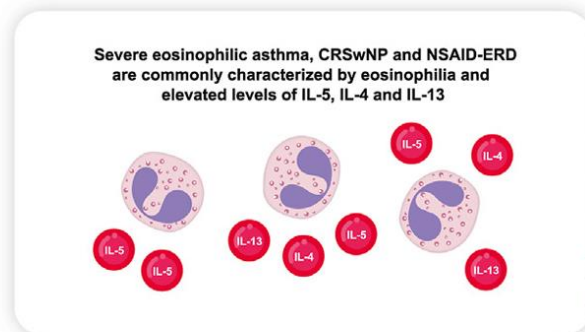
- More asthma exacerbations in severe asthma
- Lower asthma-related quality of life
- Poorer control

# United airway hypothesis

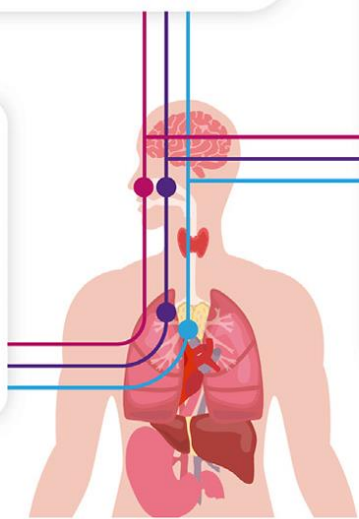
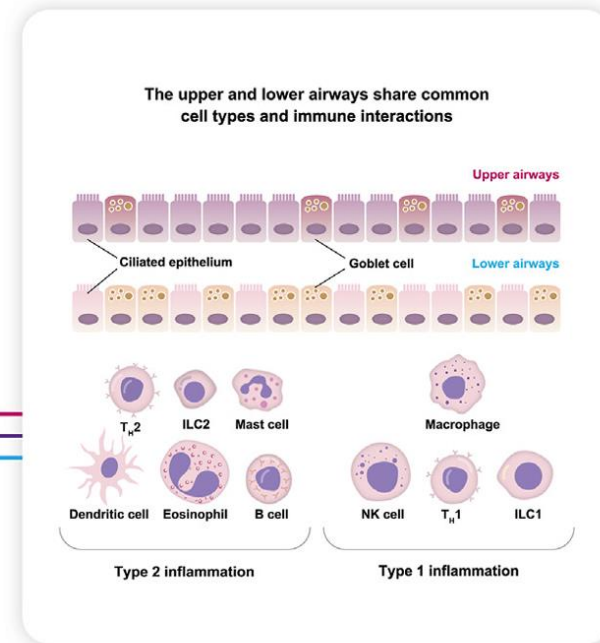
## Epidemiologic evidence



## Pathophysiologic evidence



## Functional and pathophysiologic evidence



**Table 2. Choice of Monoclonal Antibody Treatment of Severe Asthma According to Patient Characteristics.\***

Characteristic	Anti-IgE Antibody	Anti-Interleukin-4R Antibody	Anti-Interleukin-5 or Anti-Interleukin-5R Antibody
Indication	Severe allergic asthma	Severe type 2 asthma	Severe eosinophilic asthma
Age group	Children, adolescents, and young adults	Children, adolescents, and adults	Adults
Onset	Childhood	Childhood or adulthood	Adulthood
Allergy	Prerequisite: IgE sensitization to perennial allergen	Irrespective of allergy	Irrespective of allergy
Dominant biomarker	Serum total IgE (for dosing)	Increased FENO	Increased blood eosinophil count
Serum total IgE	Serum total IgE and weight within dose range, according to local eligibility criteria	Irrespective of total IgE	Irrespective of total IgE
Blood eosinophil count†	Slightly better response with increased count	>150 to <1500/ $\mu$ l†	Prerequisite: increased counts (according to local eligibility criteria), >150 to 300/ $\mu$ l†
FENO†	Slightly better response if increased FENO	Better response if FENO >25 ppb	Irrespective of FENO
Coexisting conditions	Allergic rhinitis, CRS with nasal polyposis, chronic urticaria	Atopic dermatitis, CRS with nasal polyposis	CRS with nasal polyposis
Exacerbations in previous yr	According to local criteria	According to local criteria	High frequency ( $\geq$ 2), as specified by local criteria

**Table 2** Major mental and personality disorders in 28 out of a sample of 51 patients with difficult asthma who were referred to our specialised asthma care centre (DSM-IV-TR)

	Total (n=28) n (%)	Females (n=41) n (%)	Males (n=10) n (%)
Psychiatric disorders <sup>a</sup>	28 (54.9)	26 (63.4)	2 (20)
Major mental disorders	25 (49.0)	24 (58.5)	1 (10)
Mood disorders	12 (23.5)	12 (29.3)	1 (10)
Major depressive disorder	9 (17.6)	9 (22.0)	0
Dysthymic disorder	2 (3.9)	2 (4.9)	0
Bipolar disorder	1 (2.0)	1 (2.4)	0
Anxiety disorders	15 (29.4)	12 (29.3)	1 (10)
Social phobia	4 (7.8)	4 (9.8)	0
Specific phobia	5 (9.8)	4 (9.8)	1 (10)
Post-traumatic stress disorder	4 (7.8)	4 (9.8)	0
Panic disorder	1 (2.0)	1 (2.4)	0
Obsessive–compulsive disorder	1 (2.0)	1 (2.4)	0
Substance disorders	1 (2.0)	1 (2.4)	0
Substance abuse disorder	1 (2.0)	1 (2.4)	0
Somatoform disorders	12 (23.5)	11 (26.8)	1 (10)
Somatisation disorder	5 (9.8)	5 (12.2)	0
Undifferentiated somatoform disorder	4 (7.8)	3 (7.3)	1 (10)
Pain disorder	3 (5.9)	3 (7.3)	0
Personality disorders	10 (19.6)	9 (22)	1 (10)
Borderline personality disorder	1 (2.0)	1 (2.4)	0
Avoidant personality disorder	3 (5.9)	3 (7.3)	0
Obsessive–compulsive personality disorder	9 (17.6)	8 (19.5)	1 (10)
Dependent personality disorder	1 (2.0)	1 (2.4)	0
Personality disorder NOS	1 (2.0)	2 (4.9)	0

NOS, not otherwise specified.  
a. Patients may have more than one major mental and/or psychiatric disorder.

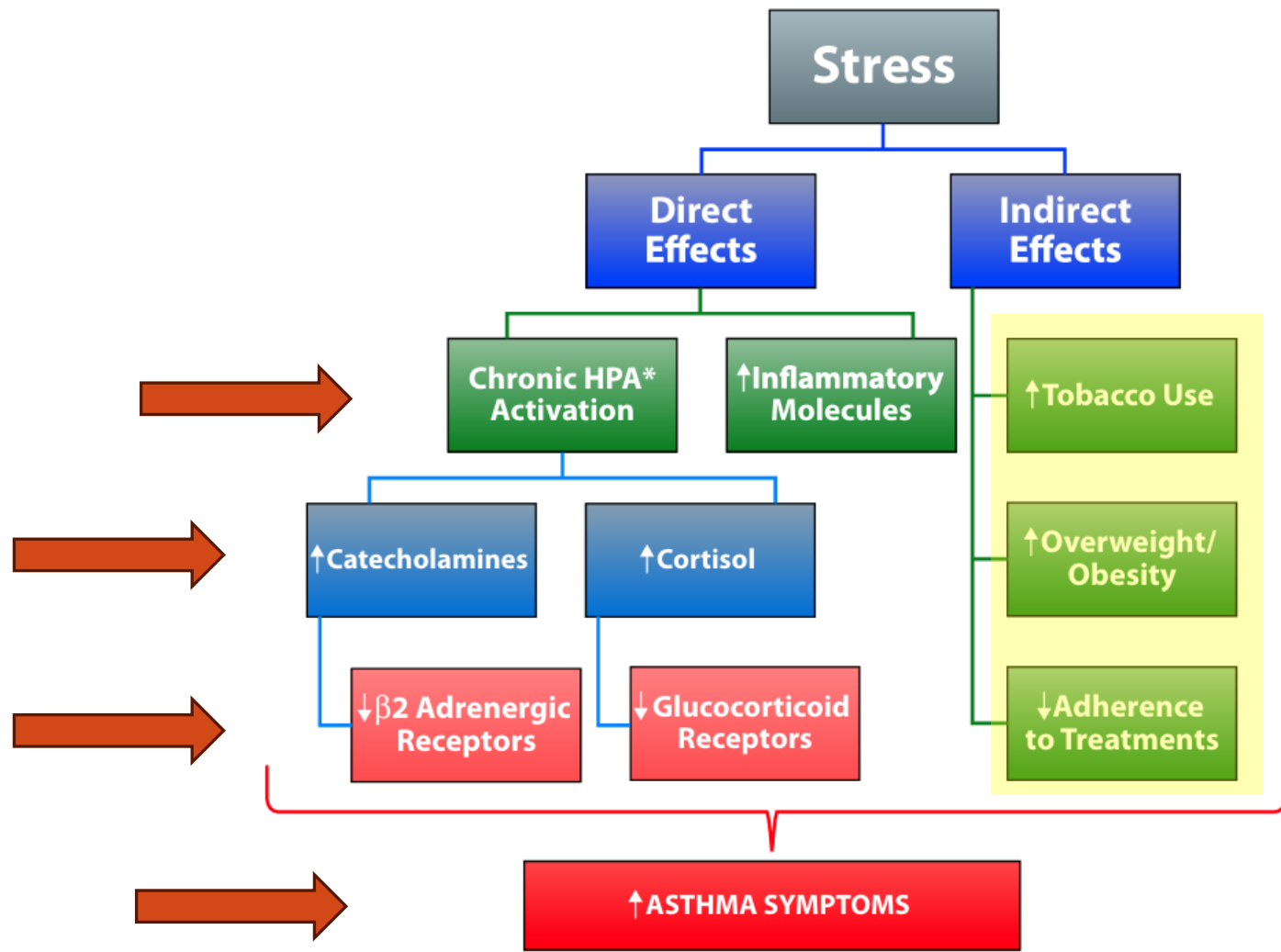
# Psychiatric comorbidity

---

Psychiatric comorbidity is also associated with

- worse asthma symptom control
- worse medication adherence
- worse asthma-related exacerbations
- frequent emergency visits.

Panic attacks may be mistaken for asthma attack



# Biofeedback therapy

## FEV1

Study or subgroup	Treatment		Control		Mean Difference Fixed, 95% CI	Mean Difference Fixed, 95% CI
	N	Mean(SD)	N	Mean(SD)		
Lehrer 2004	17	79.8 (19.9)	23	74.9 (26)		4.93[-9.32,19.18]

Favours control    -100    -50    0    50    100    Favours treatment

## Medication use

Study or subgroup	Treatment		Control		Mean Difference Fixed, 95% CI	Mean Difference Fixed, 95% CI
	N	Mean(SD)	N	Mean(SD)		
Lehrer 2004	17	5.2 (2.8)	23	7.6 (2.7)		-2.43[-4.15,-0.71]

Favours treatment    -10    -5    0    5    10    Favours control

## Withdrawals

Study or subgroup	Treatment	Control	Odds Ratio M-H, Fixed, 95% CI	Odds Ratio M-H, Fixed, 95% CI
	n/N	n/N		
Lehrer 2004	5/22	2/25		3.38[0.58,19.57]

Favours treatment    0.01    0.1    1    10    100    Favours control

## PEF

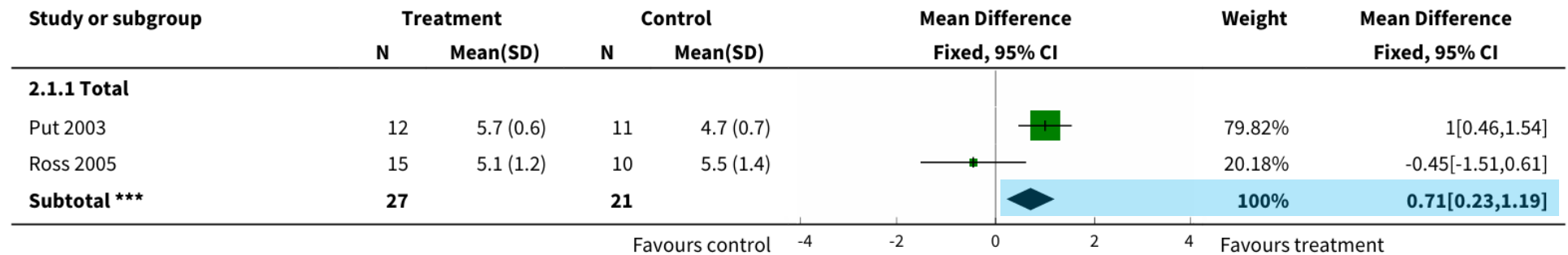
Study or subgroup	Treatment		Control		Std. Mean Difference Fixed, 95% CI	Weight	Std. Mean Difference Fixed, 95% CI
	N	Mean(SD)	N	Mean(SD)			
Lehrer 1997	6	603 (366)	5	400 (175)		21.57%	0.63[-0.61,1.86]
Lehrer 2004	17	97.3 (26)	23	78.5 (28.6)		78.43%	0.67[0.02,1.31]
<b>Total ***</b>	<b>23</b>		<b>28</b>			<b>100%</b>	<b>0.66[0.09,1.23]</b>

Heterogeneity: Tau<sup>2</sup>=0; Chi<sup>2</sup>=0, df=1(P=0.95); I<sup>2</sup>=0%  
Test for overall effect: Z=2.26(P=0.02)

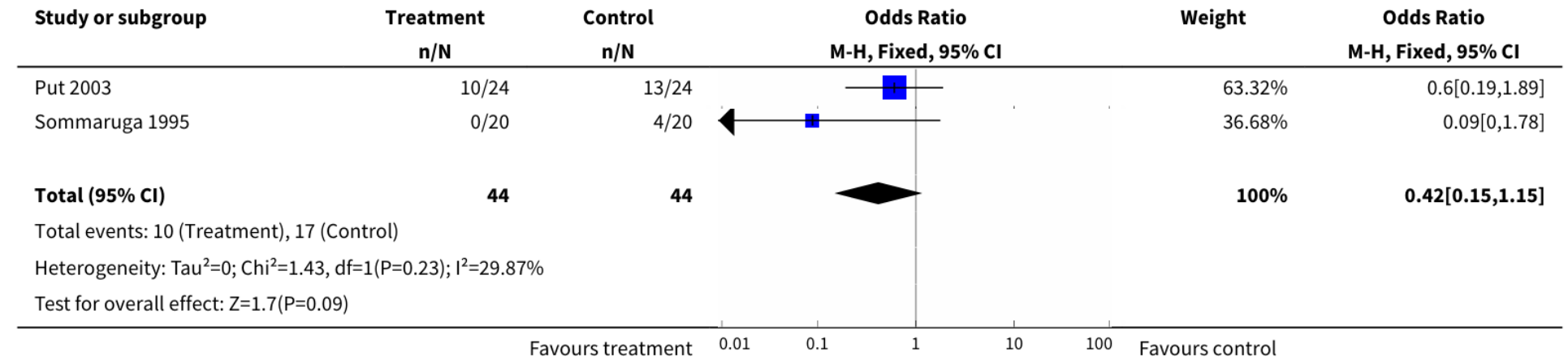
Favours control    -10    -5    0    5    10    Favours treatment

# Cognitive behavioural therapy

## Asthma QoL questionnaire

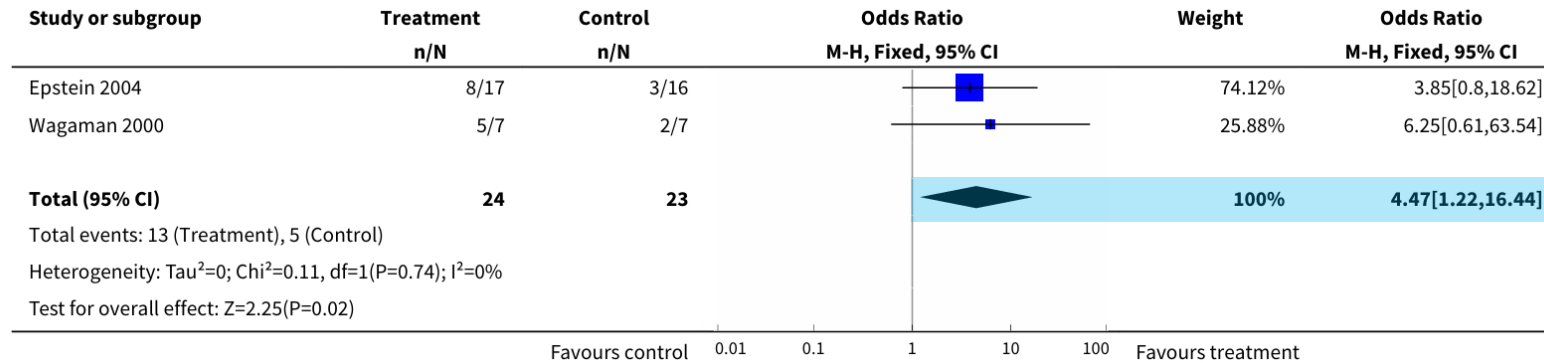


## Withdrawals

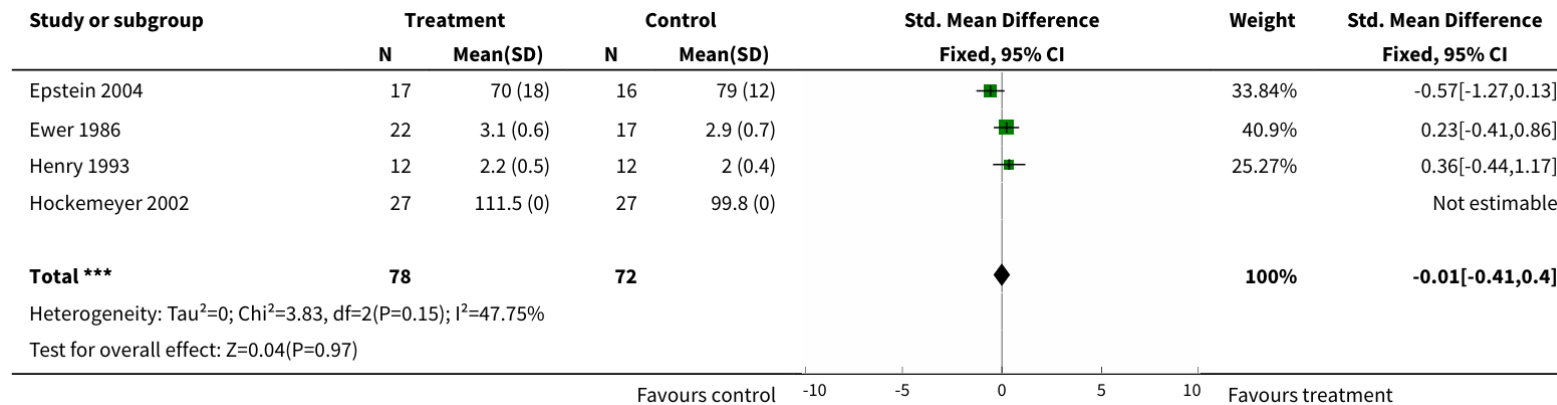


# Relaxation/hypnosis/autogenic therapy

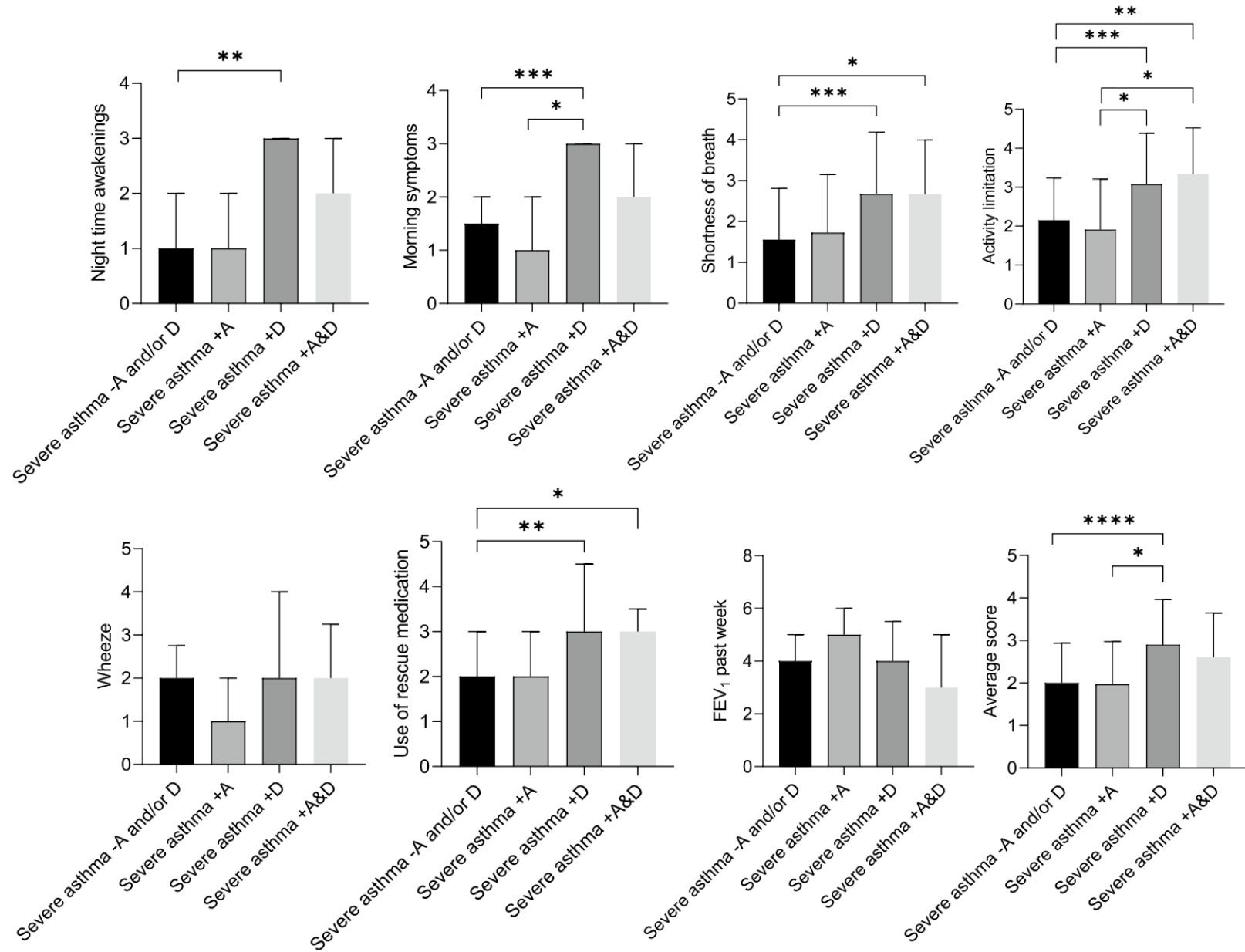
Decreased /  
discontinuation  
of medication

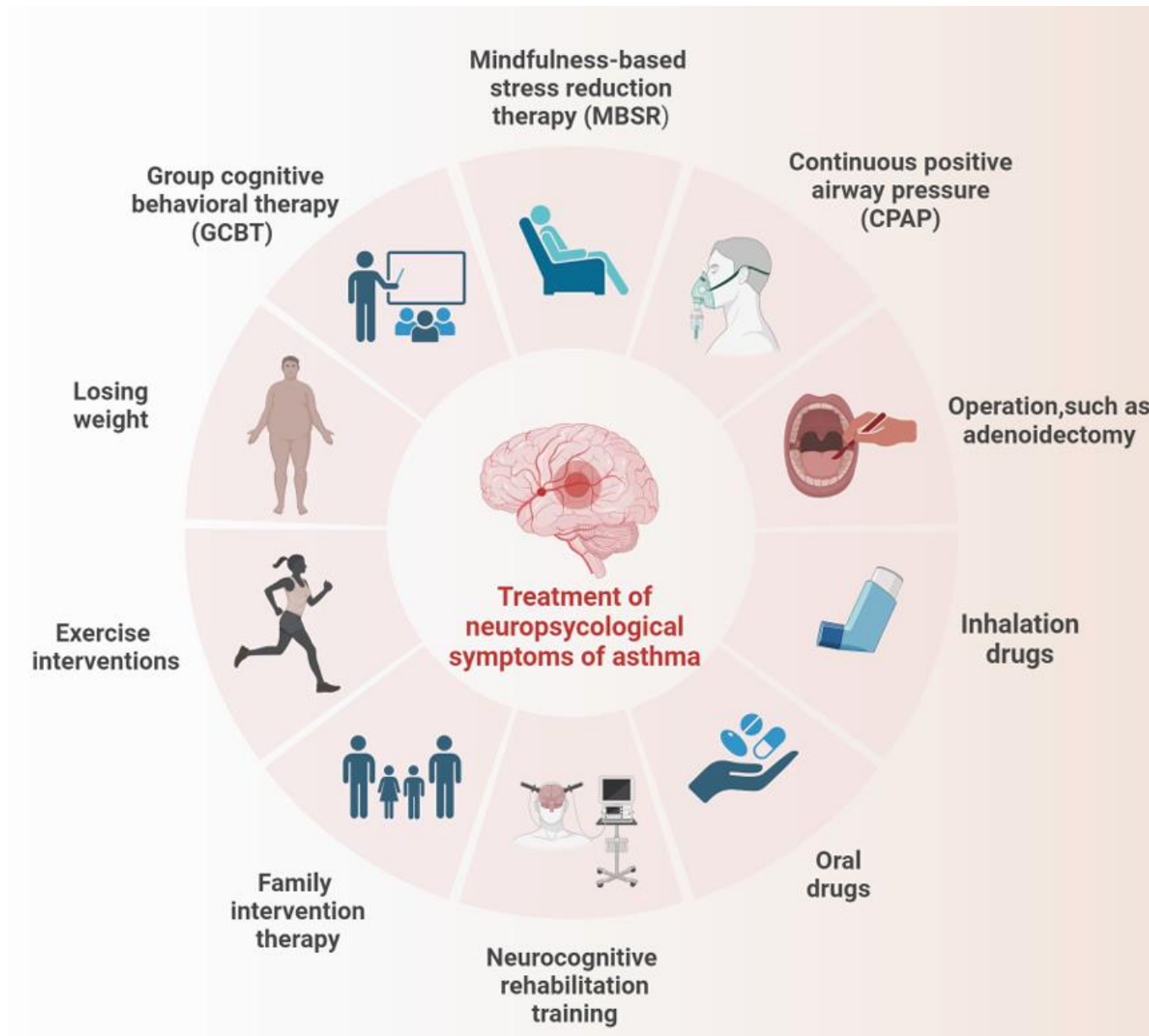


FEV1



# Associations of symptoms of anxiety and depression with asthma control in patients with severe asthma







Thank you  
for your  
attentions

---