

Asia witnessing rise in COPD, says Dr David Price

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Professor (Dr) David Price has been fighting the scourge of respiratory diseases throughout his life and is considered one of the leading authorities on the subject. Dr Price is affiliated to several organizations that conduct cutting-edge research in the field of respiratory diseases, including the Department of General Practice, University of Adelaide, Australia (as an affiliate associate professor); the University of Aberdeen (as professor of primary care respiratory medicine); and the International Primary Care Respiratory Group (as chairman of the research committee). He also functions as the director of firms such as Optimum Patient Care and Researchin Real Life. Dr Price, in an interview with *BioSpectrum*, speaks about his present projects and the scenario of respiratory diseases in Asia. Excerpts from the interview:

Tell us about the various research activities associated with respiratory diseases, which are presently on in the various institutes that you are associated with.

We are doing research into treatment and disease management for asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). We particularly specialise in more "real-life" research to understand how well drugs and other interventions work in real-life.

What makes respiratory diseases so difficult to tackle?

Several factors make respiratory diseases difficult to tackle. Asthma and COPD are not diseases as such but syndromes with

variable phenotypes. Also, asthma is a variable disease making it hard to fix treatment. Patients respond differently to different treatments and adherence seems to be a major problem. Furthermore, many factors affect disease control, including inhaler technique and type, co-morbid diseases - such as rhinitis, smoking, unusual phenotypes.

Do you have any partnership and alliances to help you in your R&D? If yes, then how are these organizations benefiting by investing in your research?

Yes, we work with a number of sponsoring organisations such as research charities, government bodies and a social enterprise called Optimum Patient Care. Also, we partner with many universities and academics across the world including units in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Australia, Canada, Malaysia and Vietnam

What do you think are the three most significant achievements and successes of your institutes in the battle against respiratory diseases?

We have had several significant developments in our work in respiratory diseases. Recent work includes UK government-funded research that has shown comparable effectiveness between leukotriene antagonists and inhaled steroids. We published the research in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Other work published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology has shown an association between inhaled steroid particle size and asthma control with small particle formulations provided better outcomes and similar work showing more advanced inhalers providing better results.

What are the R&D programs in your pipeline? What are your objectives for the future?

We have a large body of work further exploring inhaler technique and asthma outcomes, studies of drugs in COPD and smoking cessation

What are your views on the R&D, activities and trends associated with Respiratory Diseases in Asia?

Asia has a massive increase in COPD due to smoking and longer life spans. Also, asthma is increasing in prevalence with the adoption of western lifestyles. Chronic diseases are replacing infectious illnesses and this has emerged as the future challenge for Asia.