

## A COMPARISON OF PRACTICE PATTERNS AMONG CERTIFIED AND NON-CERTIFIED ASTHMA EDUCATORS

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**Background:** Asthma educators are essential for providing patients with the knowledge and skills needed to control asthma. The purpose of this quantitative, cross-sectional survey was to examine the differences in practice patterns between certified and non-certified asthma educators and evaluate regional differences in practice patterns based on location in the United States. **Methods:** The participants ( $n = 98$ ) included certified asthma educators ( $n = 66$ ) and non-certified asthma educators ( $n = 32$ ) who provided asthma education directly to patients and their families. Participants were asked to complete a 31-item survey which assessed the frequency of tasks related to asthma education. **Results:** Certified asthma educators reported higher frequency scores on 11 of the 31 variables. There was no difference between certified asthma educators and non-certified asthma educators for 18 of the 31 variables. Non-certified asthma educators reported higher frequencies than certified asthma educators for the variables *Explain the definition of asthma control and loss of control, and controlled versus not well controlled, and Refer a patient to an asthma specialist if needed*. The largest difference in reported means between certified and non-certified asthma educators was for the variable *Diagnose asthma* with certified asthma educators reported higher frequencies. The least frequently reported variable for both groups was *Perform or interpret the results of bronchial challenge (i.e. exercise or inhaled agents such as methacholine)*. For regional differences, results indicated a statistically significant difference in the variable *Help the patient identify factors that contribute to chronic and acute asthma like identifying triggers* ( $p = .042$ ). No statistical difference was found in any of the other variables. **Conclusion:** The results suggest that there is little difference between the practice patterns of certified and non-certified asthma educators and little difference based on regional location.

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