

# Ten years of the website for patients with asthma (www.myasthma.gr) by the Asthma Working Group of the Hellenic Thoracic Society

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Asthma is a common chronic condition with a considerable socioeconomic impact that may negatively impair the daily routine of asthmatic patients in each age group<sup>1</sup>. Although patients' education offered by healthcare providers plays a cardinal role in the effective management of asthma, the time available during medical appointments may not be adequate for discussing various issues that concern the patients about their disease. Therefore, the patients often search for information from any source they can access<sup>2</sup>.

Currently, a range of scholarly sources on the internet promote the transmission of knowledge, especially for younger patients with asthma<sup>3</sup>. Numerous web pages which provide information about asthma in English are available nowadays; these websites can be classified as those sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry, webpages of non-governmental and other non-profit healthcare organizations, and patient support groups. Nonetheless, few of these websites meet the perceived needs of asthmatic patients. Furthermore, the quality of information retrieved during an internet search is mainly poor, and often, patients receive incorrect and potentially hazardous information<sup>4</sup>. However, only a handful of web pages for Greek patients exist, even nowadays. This unmet need for patient-oriented, scientifically valid, and easily accessible information about asthma in the Greek language, motivated the Asthma Working Group of the Hellenic Thoracic Society to design the website<sup>5</sup> www.myasthma.gr.

The website was first presented in April 2012 with the aim to provide personalized and patient-focused medical information for asthma in the Greek language, with a simple and pleasing interface for the average internet user. The website has met the perceived needs of patients, especially young asthmatics, and quickly picked up, building an ever-growing body of unique visitors over time.

This site provides general information about asthma and its pathogenesis, the more frequent symptoms of the disease, the most important diagnostic tests required for a specific diagnosis, potential triggers that may aggravate asthma, and the primary management of exacerbations, as well as information about other common comorbidities in asthma, such as allergic rhinitis and allergies. Moreover, a validated questionnaire that patients can answer easily and quickly is also included on the platform, to assist them in identifying the symptoms that require medical management by a respiratory physician. A separate section is devoted to the different categories of asthma medication, the optimal use of inhaler devices, and a series of simple measures that may aid asthmatic patients in the self-management of their disease, in order to achieve asthma control and live a normal life. The site provides a link to the Asthma Control Test (ACT) that can be easily performed online, allowing the self-assessment of asthma control level and advising asthmatic patients to refer to their physician if needed. Special sections cover occupational and exercise-induced asthma, as well as asthma in pregnancy and asthma in the elderly. Information regarding childhood asthma, with a focus on what parents of asthmatic children need to know, is also provided. Data about asthma prevalence in Greece, famous asthmatics, and the history of asthma are also attractively presented. At the same time, a

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special section with common questions and answers about asthma is also available. Finally, a blog illustrating recent scientific evidence on asthma, with up-to-date manuscripts presented comprehensively, achieves the apparent objective of providing user-friendly references focused on asthmatic patients' current needs.

The website was created under the auspices and with the support of the Hellenic Thoracic Society. Respiratory physicians with long-standing experience in managing asthma at different sites, from primary care to asthma clinics of tertiary and university hospitals, participated in site design and content, and experienced clinicians have provided manuscripts for its various domains and continuously answered the questions the website's users have submitted during its ten years of operation.

Recently, a thorough 'face-lift' of the [www.myasthma.gr](http://www.myasthma.gr) layout has been presented in a virtual event during the World Health Day on 3 May 2022. Newly updated sections on asthma management were also presented, including the use of monoclonal antibodies biologic therapies for asthma, asthma self-management, and COVID-19, as well as the new site editorial board.

Healthcare professionals need to be updated about current medical practice to provide the best medical care for their patients. Under this perspective, the website [www.myasthma.gr](http://www.myasthma.gr) addresses all asthma patients and respiratory and primary care physicians. It can act as a tool to help in the effective management of asthmatic patients and complement discussions during office visits. This website may be an independent source of information for patients and caregivers, but also busy clinicians may find a credible medical website to recommend to their patients. The reader may find additional information at <http://www.myasthma.gr/> and in the [myasthma.gr](https://www.facebook.com/myasthma.gr) Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/myasthma.gr>

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have each completed and submitted an ICMJE form for disclosure of potential conflicts of interest. The authors declare that they have no competing interests, financial or otherwise, related to the current work. K. Samitas reports receiving payment from MSD, Chiesi, AstraZeneca, Menarini, Specialty Therapeutics, GSK, Novartis, ELPEN, BMS and Boehringer through his institution. He also reports support for attending meetings from GSK, AstraZeneca, Chiesi and ELPEN, support for participation on a Data Safety Monitoring Board from AstraZeneca, GSK, Specialty Therapeutics and Menarini through his institution, and that he is a moderator of the Hellenic Thoracic Society Asthma Group. P. Bakakos reports receiving consulting fees from AstraZeneca, Chiesi, ELPEN, GSK, Menarini, Specialty Therapeutics, MSD and Pfizer. He also reports receiving payment for presentations from AstraZeneca, Boehringer Ingelheim, Chiesi, ELPEN, GSK, Menarini and Novartis.

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## DATA AVAILABILITY

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## PROVENANCE AND PEER REVIEW

Commissioned; internally peer reviewed.

## DISCLAIMER

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors.

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