Recently the results of a large national comprehensive survey of patients with asthma, the Asthma Insight and Management (AIM) study, became available. In a survey of the state of asthma in the United States, 2500 people from across the country aged 12 and older with asthma were interviewed. Over 1000 adults without current asthma were also interviewed to compare their responses to the adult asthma group. Finally, a national sampling of health care providers (pediatricians, internists and specialists) was interviewed for their perspectives. The results clearly show that asthma management in the US is not nearly as good as it could be.

Unfortunately, despite some newer medications and approaches, there has been no meaningful change in many aspects of asthma care over the past decade, with almost no decrease in missed work/school days and activity limitations due to asthma. Asthma patients continue to have substantial activity limitations and more sick days compared with persons without asthma. The majority of the asthma patients still report sudden severe episodes of asthma symptoms in the last year. One third of asthma patients report that they still needed acute care for their asthma, such as emergency room visits and hospitalizations. All of these findings contribute to the fact that nearly one-half of this random sampling of asthmatics was classified as having very poorly controlled asthma. Despite this poor control, asthma patients see this as normal. Most of the patients actually believe that their asthma is well managed if they have 2 months or longer between exacerbations or have one emergency room visit per year. Unfortunately, most physician expectations were not much higher than those of the patients.

These results are extremely disappointing!! With appropriate care, the majority of asthma patients should expect few symptoms and no emergency room or hospitalizations for asthma. There have been major improvements in the understanding and treatment of asthma, focusing on asthma as an inflammatory disease which can be very well controlled in most cases using appropriate maintenance therapy. We at the Asthma Institute offer a comprehensive approach to symptomatic asthma which involves physicians across related specialties, asthma educators and supporting staff.

Feel free to call 412-648 6161 to make an appointment with Dr. Wenzel or Dr. Holguin.

We are committed to working closely with our patients to improve their disease so that it is not controlling them!
The Asthma Institute prides itself on doing cutting edge research into the understanding and treatment of patients whose asthma cannot be well controlled with current medications, despite aggressive efforts. We currently have two new studies for asthma patients who are on a lot of medications to treat their disease. These studies involve monthly infusions of a new drug Mepolizumab and one very similar to it. Mepolizumab was found to improve exacerbations of asthma and reduce prednisone doses in two small studies published in the New England Journal of Medicine within the last year. This drug works by blocking the migration of eosinophils into the lung, a cell long believed to be critical for asthma. We are expanding on these small trials to see if similar results will be seen in a larger population. As is typical for these trials, half of the patients will get mepolizumab. The remainder will get placebo (saline-salt water-infusion) to make certain that the drug works or not. For information on any of our studies, please call the asthma research line at 866-804-5278.

**Research at the Asthma Institute**

**Asthma Support Group**

Often people with asthma feel alone. They don’t think that those without asthma understand what they go through. The Asthma Institute offers a support group for asthma patients and their significant others. The group usually meets every other month on the second Monday of the month. Parking is free. If you are interested in coming, please contact Cathy Vitari at 412-692-4373.

**Announcing the new Asthma Institute Website!**

Check out our new Asthma Institute website at [www.asthmainstitute.pitt.edu](http://www.asthmainstitute.pitt.edu). While it is still a work in progress, we hope that it will become a useful resource for asthmatics and physicians alike. You can also sign up for our e-mail newsletters and alerts, ask questions, and find information on our available research studies. We hope to see you there!