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Last May 6, 2014, the **Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA)**, launched the latest update of their famous guidelines for asthma. The latest update was made to be easier to read and understand. The update included changes in the definition of asthma, emphasis on confirming the asthma diagnosis, and updated strategies in asthma care. Notable in this year’s GINA guidelines is the publication of a separate Appendix.

The Buteyko Method has been included as a non-pharmaceutical intervention. Referred to as “breathing exercises”, it has been advised as a useful supplement to asthma pharmacology. It was given an Evidence Level “A”, which is the highest grade of evidence GINA assigns to any form of treatment.

Studies on the Buteyko Method particularly Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) and Metanalysis have sufficiently convinced the authors of GINA. Although the main document merely mentioned “breathing exercises”, **the separate appendix clarified that the “breathing exercises” pertained to were the Buteyko Method and the Papworth Method**

Also notable in the document was the mention of hyperventilation and dysfunctional breathing which can occur with asthma for people as young as 12 years old. The symptoms of these 2 entities are dizziness, paresthesia, and sighing. The Buteyko Method is the treatment of choice for dysfunctional breathing according to the British Thoracic Society (BTS) Guidelines.

The GINA guidelines now promote the Buteyko Method as a mainstream “non-pharmaceutical” option. It is lamenting to note that the authors have decided to call the Buteyko Method (along with the Papworth Method) as “Breathing Exercises” in the main document.

Merely being called “Breathing Exercises” can lead to misinterpretations. Other forms of breathing exercises which have no evidence and may promote opposing principles may be mistakenly recommended. Although, the document’s appendix clarifies this matter, it is doubtful that many health care workers will read through it thoroughly.

Being called a “breathing exercise” also does not give complete justice to the Buteyko Method. Beyond breathing, the Buteyko Method promotes a healthy diet, stress management, and allergen avoidance.

The new GINA guidelines broaden the indications for physicians and health care workers to recommend the Buteyko Method. In the past, the Buteyko Method was recommended particularly for those over using their medications only. Today however, it is recommended for any asthmatic with a risk factor.