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BREATHING EXERCISES IMPROVE ASTHMA

Learning to breathe properly could ‘significantly improve’ asthma and quality of life for the 5.1 million people with asthma in the UK, according to new research presented today at the British Thoracic Society’s (BTS) Winter Meeting (Thursday 4th December).

Nurse, Jill McGowan, led the world’s largest clinical trial to measure the effects of the Buteyko method (breathing retraining exercises in conjunction with conventional asthma management). 384 of the initial 600 participants (64%) completed the trial.

Those patients who were taught the Buteyko Institute Method all experienced significant improvement in asthma, with reduced symptoms, reduced medication and improvement in quality of life.

- Asthma symptoms decreased by an average of 98%
- Use of reliever inhalers decreased by an average of 98%
- Use of preventor inhalers decreased by an average of 92%
- Instance of cold or flu decreased by an average of 20%

The Buteyko Institute Method is designed to help people with asthma slow their breathing to normal levels. It is also suggested for a range of other breathing related conditions such as hay fever, sinusitis, sleep apnoea, emphysema and anxiety and panic attacks.

Dr John Harvey, chair of the BTS Communications Committee commented:
“As lung specialists, we know from clinical experience that spending even a small amount of time teaching patients how to manage their condition and to control their breathing appropriately can reduce both the number of asthma attacks and improve their quality of life.

“However, I would stress that the Buteyko method should not be practiced in isolation but as a complementary addition to conventional asthma treatment.”

Jill McGowan said: “This study clearly demonstrates that teaching people with asthma to breathe correctly with the Buteyko Institute Method provides significant improvements.

“The Buteyko Institute Method will be key in reducing patients’ reliance on their inhalers and helping people manage their asthma with significantly less medication and feeling more in control of their condition.”

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**For more information please call Kathryn Williams or Caitlin Woodward
on 0207 798 4312 or 0207 798 4313**

Notes to editors

The BTS is the UK’s professional body of respiratory specialists