

## Risk assessment for patients with chronic respiratory conditions in the context of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic

Page 1 | 18

Statement of the German Respiratory Society (DGP) with the support of the German Association of Chest Physicians (BdP)

First published on April 27, 2020

Revised and supplemented version of November 26, 2020

### Introduction

The current SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has created uncertainty regarding the question of how to adequately protect specific patient groups suffering from chronic respiratory conditions—both among physicians, who have a duty to provide patients with suitable and meaningful protective measures, and among patients, who understandably wish to protect themselves optimally against COVID-19. Assessing the risk for specific patient groups is therefore of particular importance.

### *Characteristics of the disease*

The SARS-CoV-2 virus responsible for COVID-19 can be transmitted also by asymptomatic carriers (according to current estimates, 15–31% of all infected persons remain asymptomatic)<sup>1,2</sup> or by those infected before they develop symptoms<sup>3</sup> (**Fig. 1**): This, in addition to the high contagiousness, contributes to the rapid spread of the virus. Most COVID-19 cases are mild to moderate (**Fig. 1**), and patients become symptomatic on average 11.5 days post infection (the most common symptoms are: cough, fever, loss of smell and taste, fatigue, myalgias; gastrointestinal symptoms are also possible in some patients).<sup>4,5</sup> A minority of patients develops severe COVID-19 7–10 days after the onset of symptoms (**Fig. 1**),<sup>5</sup> with shortness of breath, pneumonia, and respiratory distress, which, in less than 25% of hospitalized patients<sup>6</sup>, requires intensive care (including mechanical ventilation).<sup>7,8</sup> Signs of progression to severe disease are shortness of breath, tachypnea, and/or drop in oxygen saturation below 94%.<sup>4</sup> In addition to pneumonia, severe COVID-19 can result in severe endothelial injury of the pulmonary vessels<sup>9</sup> with intravascular thrombosis and thromboembolic events,<sup>10,11</sup> massive release of cytokines,<sup>12</sup> and multi-organ failure.<sup>5</sup> High-flow nasal oxygen therapy, non-invasive ventilation (NIV), invasive ventilation, and extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO)<sup>13</sup> are treatment options for these patients. There are separate recommendations on the use of these methods.<sup>8,14</sup> There is an enhanced risk of complications if an intubation occurs too early or too late in patients with severe COVID-19.<sup>7</sup>

### *Epidemiology of severe courses of the disease*

While up to 20% of the patients were hospitalized in early 2020, with a case fatality rate of approximately 4% (based on data reported to the Robert Koch Institute, RKI), only about 6% of the patients were hospitalized in Germany in September and October 2020, and the most recent case fatality rate was below 1% (85% of the deceased were at least 70 years old). This drop is most likely attributable to higher testing rates and demographic shifts, with a larger percentage of younger people being infected.<sup>2</sup> In an evaluation based on the health insurance data of 10,021 patients in 920 hospitals in Germany, 17% of patients received

#### ADDRESS

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Pneumologie  
und Beatmungsmedizin e.V.  
German Respiratory Society  
Robert-Koch-Platz 9  
10115 Berlin

#### EXECUTIVE BOARD

Prof. Dr. med. M. Pfeifer, President  
Prof. Dr. med. T. T. Bauer, Vice President  
Prof. Dr. med. W. J. Randerath, Secretary General  
PD Dr. med. T. Köhnlein, Treasurer  
Prof. Dr. med. K. F. Rabe, Past President

#### NONPROFIT REGISTRATION

Vereinsregister-Nr.  
(federal registry of nonprofit associations)  
Vereinsregister des Amtsgerichts  
Marburg: VR 622

#### VAT REGISTRATION

USt-IdNr. (VAT Reg.): DE190100878

## STATEMENT

mechanical ventilation, their median age was 71, and 66% were male. In-hospital lethality was 22% (16% of the non-ventilated and 53% of the ventilated patients).<sup>6</sup> Based on a comparable analysis of health insurance data, this in-hospital lethality is higher than in patients with community-acquired pneumonia (17%).<sup>15</sup> The real lethality of COVID-19 is still unknown, as it depends on the actual number of those infected, which is unknown. Current models from Europe assume a lethality rate of between 0.3% and 0.9%.<sup>16-19</sup> Hence, the lethality rate in the current SARS-CoV-2 pandemic could be higher than for seasonal influenza during a severe season (0.1%).<sup>20</sup> However, in contrast to SARS-CoV-2, only direct deaths are considered as influenza-related deaths in patients infected with influenza viruses.

The following statements refer, in particular, to the risk of severe disease or death after SARS-CoV-2 infection (Fig. 1). They provide answers to frequently asked questions based on 13 exemplary cases.

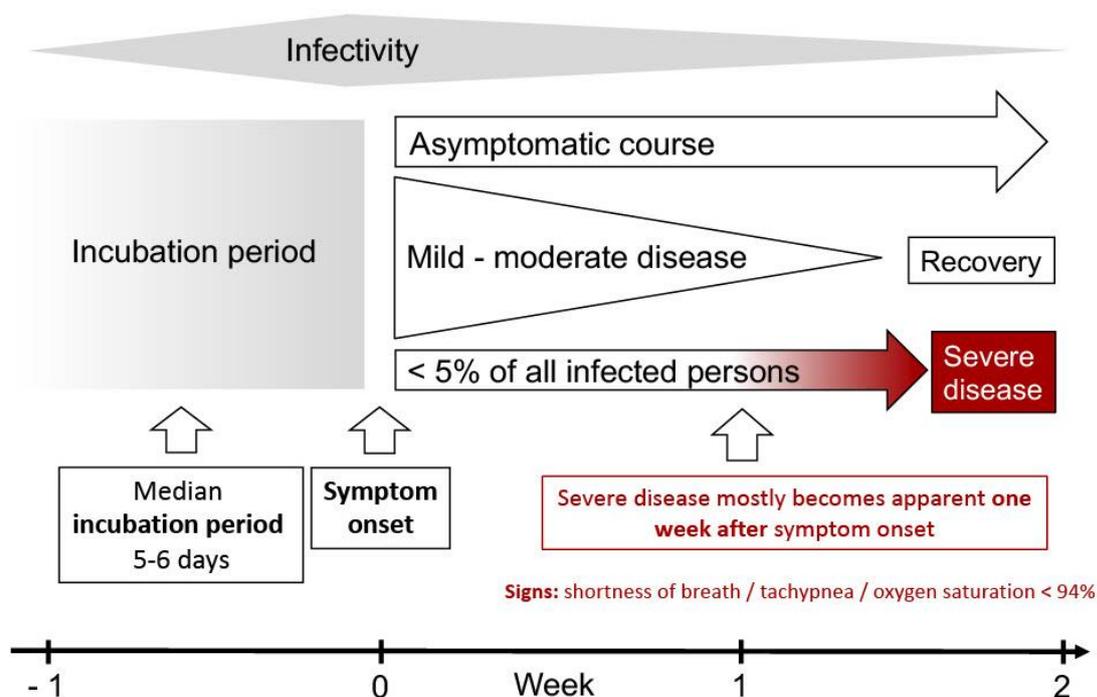


Fig. 1, Lommatzsch et al.

### Figure 1: Courses of SARS-CoV-2 infections

With a median incubation period of 5-6 days, SARS-CoV-2 has a longer incubation period than the influenza virus, but the risk of transmission from one person to another is higher. In addition, most infected have mild symptoms or are asymptomatic. During this incubation period or during a mild or asymptomatic course of the disease, those infected with SARS-CoV-2 can, therefore, spread the virus quickly and unnoticeably, with virus transmission peaking around the day of onset of symptoms. In contrast to severe influenza-related pneumonia, severe courses of COVID-19 rarely cause an abrupt deterioration of the patient's general condition after the incubation period. On average, it is only after one week of relatively mild symptoms that shortness of breath and respiratory distress may appear (only in very few cases, a rapid deterioration can occur directly after symptom onset). Signs of progression to severe disease are: shortness of breath, tachypnea, and/or a drop in oxygen saturation below 94%.<sup>4,5</sup>

## STATEMENT

### Question 1 (General): Who is most at risk for a severe course of COVID-19?

Page 3 | 18

**Answer 1:** Current data show that higher age is the most significant risk factor for severe COVID-19 or death. The lethality risk increases continuously from the 6th decade of life and is 20 times higher for an 80-year-old person than for a 50-year-old person.<sup>21</sup> This is also confirmed by data from Germany: While persons  $\geq 70$  years of age were only 12% of those infected, 85% of deaths occurred in this age group.<sup>2</sup> Additional established risk factors for severe COVID-19 progressions, according to current knowledge, are:<sup>6,21-28</sup>

- obesity
- male gender
- diabetes mellitus
- cardiovascular diseases

Other risk factors for severe COVID-19, according to current knowledge, also include:<sup>6,21-28</sup>

- chronic kidney or liver disease
- cerebrovascular/neurological diseases
- cancer
- COPD
- advanced interstitial lung disease
- immunodeficiency/treatment with immunosuppressants.

The presence of more than one chronic disease or more than one risk factor significantly increases the risk of severe disease.<sup>22,29</sup> The lethality risk is particularly high for nursing home residents because of their advanced age and high incidence of multiple chronic diseases. In addition, the virus is easily transmitted in nursing homes as nursing staff care for multiple residents with close physical contact.<sup>30</sup>

### Question 2 (Mild to moderate asthma): I am a 58-year-old teacher and have moderate, well-controlled asthma; I regularly use my inhaled medications. Does this make me a risk patient? Is it safe for me to go to work during the coronavirus pandemic?

**Answer 2:** Early general COVID-19 case series indicated that having asthma does not increase the risk for severe COVID-19.<sup>6,21-28</sup> Subsequently, specific case series which included only patients with asthma from Spain,<sup>31</sup> Belgium<sup>32</sup>, France<sup>33</sup>, Brazil,<sup>34</sup> Russia<sup>35</sup>, Japan<sup>36</sup>, and the US<sup>37-42</sup> unanimously confirmed that asthma is not a risk factor for severe COVID-19. Even patients with severe asthma treated with biologics do not appear to be at an increased risk.<sup>43-50</sup> One study from Korea suggested that the subgroup of patients with nonallergic asthma might have an increased risk of progression to severe disease,<sup>51</sup> but another study from Korea showed asthma not to be an independent risk factor for severe COVID-19 in Korea.<sup>52</sup> Based on the large number of data available today, it is, therefore, assumed that asthma (of all severities) is **not** an independent risk factor for severe COVID-19.<sup>53</sup> There is even speculation that this risk may be lower in asthma,<sup>54-56</sup> in part due to a reduced expression of the ACE-2 receptor responsible for the uptake of SARS-CoV-2 in the airways.<sup>57</sup> This was observed, in particular, in patients with allergies and/or type 2 inflammation.<sup>59-62</sup> Currently, there is also no evidence that a low- or medium-dose inhaled corticosteroid (ICS) therapy to treat

## STATEMENT

asthma increases the risk of developing severe COVID-19.<sup>63</sup> Since ICS generally reduce the risk of asthma exacerbations and may additionally reduce the expression of the ACE-2 receptor in the airways,<sup>64</sup> a protective effect is instead suspected.<sup>65</sup> Interruptions of ICS therapy may lead to severe asthma exacerbations and, as such, contribute to a severe course of the disease in the event of a SARS-CoV-2 infection. Therefore, inhalation therapy, and in particular with ICS, should be continued in patients with well-controlled asthma during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic: there are separate and detailed statements on this topic by the DGP (statement on asthma therapy with inhaled corticosteroids, [www.pneumologie.de](http://www.pneumologie.de)) and by the GINA (<https://ginasthma.org/recommendations-for-inhaled-asthma-controller-medications>). Allergen immunotherapy (allergen-specific immunotherapy) should also be continued: A separate EAACI statement is available in this regard.<sup>66</sup> We, therefore, suggest that patients with asthma who have no acute symptoms and no COVID-19-relevant comorbidities can work in schools as long as the RKI-recommended hygiene measures (AHA-L rules of physical distancing and hygiene: Keep physical distance, observe hygiene procedures, wear a face mask, ventilate indoor areas) are observed. Page 4 | 18

**Question 3 (Severe asthma): I am an executive, 48 years old, and have severe asthma. I am using several inhaled medications in high-doses, and receive a biologic regularly (the injections are performed by my respiratory physician). Can I continue to work at my job? Should I self-isolate at home? Should I inject the biologic myself at home?**

**Answer 3:** Currently, there is no evidence that patients using biologics would generally be at a higher risk of developing severe COVID-19.<sup>67,68</sup> Patients with severe asthma treated with biologics do not appear to be at an increased risk of a severe disease.<sup>43-50</sup> The only published patient with severe asthma under biologic therapy who died of COVID-19 had four typical COVID-19 risk factors (age, male gender, hypertension, diabetes), which explained the severe course of the disease.<sup>31</sup> However, there is evidence that treatment with systemic steroids<sup>21</sup> or high-dose ICS<sup>63</sup> (which can be equivalent to a low-dose therapy with systemic steroids<sup>69</sup>) may increase the risk of severe COVID-19. In patients with severe asthma, it is, therefore, of particular importance during the coronavirus pandemic to avoid long-term or repeated systemic steroid therapy, by following a guideline-based therapy, e.g. with biologics ([www.leitlinien.de/nvl/asthma](http://www.leitlinien.de/nvl/asthma)). It is, therefore, recommended to continue the biologic therapy in patients with severe asthma, especially to avoid the necessity of systemic corticosteroid therapy and/or exacerbation-related hospitalizations. A separate DGAKI statement on this topic is available (<https://dgaki.de/biologika-therapie-u-covid-19>). Patients with well-controlled severe asthma, without acute symptoms, can work outside their homes, as long as the RKI-recommended behavioral measures (AHA-L rules of physical distancing and hygiene) are strictly observed. Self-administration of a biologic at home (which is possible and approved for omalizumab, mepolizumab, benralizumab, and dupilumab) should be encouraged to reduce contact with medical facilities and thus minimize the risk of contact with patients infected with SARS-CoV-2.

**Question 4 (COPD): I am a 68-year-old pensioner with COPD. I had a heart attack three years ago, and I suffer from high blood pressure. Currently, I still smoke 3–4 cigarettes per day. Can I continue to take my high blood pressure medication (e.g., ramipril) and continue with inhalations? Should I be**

## STATEMENT

**vaccinated against pneumococci? Should I shelter at home for the duration of the coronavirus pandemic? Can I see my children and grandchildren?** Page 5 | 18

**Answer 4:** According to current data, COPD patients are at a moderately increased risk of severe COVID-19.<sup>23,27,70</sup> Patients with COPD and cardiovascular comorbidities are at a significantly increased risk.<sup>23,71</sup> Inhalation therapy according to current guidelines should generally be continued. So far, there is also no evidence that inhaled corticosteroids might negatively impact the prognosis of patients with COPD. A study of almost 150,000 patients with COPD from the UK suggested an increased mortality in patients with COPD treated with ICS. However, the authors concluded that this was probably the result of patient selection (*bias by indication*) rather than treatment.<sup>63</sup> High blood pressure therapy, including ACE inhibitors (such as ramipril) or sartans, should also be continued; there is no evidence that these drugs increase the risk of severe disease.<sup>72,73</sup> It is strongly recommended to stop smoking cigarettes. Vaccination against pneumococci is also strongly recommended, if not already done. As long as there are no signs of COVID-19 disease, sheltering at home is unnecessary. However, the RKI recommendations (AHA-L rules of physical distancing and hygiene) should be strictly observed. In the current situation, get-togethers with children or grandchildren should be avoided as much as possible, and keeping in touch over the phone or by video conference should be preferred.

**Question 5 (Cystic fibrosis): I am a 22-year-old student and have cystic fibrosis. I take my medication regularly and have been receiving treatment at a cystic fibrosis outpatient clinic since I was a child. Should I keep my current appointments with my physiotherapist? Should I stay at home for the duration of the coronavirus pandemic? Should I continue to take my medication as before and also continue the inhalation therapy?**

**Answer 5:** The published number of COVID-19 cases in patients with cystic fibrosis (CF) continues to be very limited.<sup>74</sup> An update published by the "Cystic Fibrosis Registry Global Harmonization Group" reports 181 cases with SARS-CoV-2 from 19 countries in which approximately 85,000 CF patients reside (update: 06/13/2020).<sup>75</sup> Among the infected patients, there were 32 transplanted patients (mostly status post lung transplant). A total of 11 (of which 7 were transplanted) patients required intensive care: 7 (of which 3 were transplanted) patients died. The authors conclude that a severe course was associated with increased age, CF-associated diabetes mellitus, poorer lung function, and status post organ transplant.<sup>75</sup> Overall, however, the course of the disease in this cohort was better than expected and more favorable than in other cohorts of patients with chronic lung diseases: This might be related to the protective effect of the relatively young age of CF patients.<sup>75</sup> These patients generally also practice very good basic hygiene, regardless of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. It is generally recommended that patients with CF or bronchiectasis of other causes continue their primary therapy comprising pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical measures. This also applies to potential breathing exercises. However, these should be performed alone by the patient, where possible. Separate DGP recommendations are available on hygiene measures during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic in connection with outpatient physical therapy ([https://pneumologie.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/COVID-19/20201103\\_Physiotherapie\\_SARS-CoV-2.pdf](https://pneumologie.de/fileadmin/user_upload/COVID-19/20201103_Physiotherapie_SARS-CoV-2.pdf)). Many therapists offer video therapy sessions in addition or as an alternative to in-person visits and have been permitted to request reimbursement for these therapies in Germany. Likewise, clinically indicated outpatient or inpatient antibiotic therapies and regular follow-ups at specialized outpatient centers should be continued. Close monitoring of laboratory parameters and clinical follow-ups are mandatory when starting CFTR modulator therapy (after week 2 and 6 and every 12 weeks thereafter in the first year of therapy).<sup>76</sup> If initiation of a CFTR modulator therapy has already been planned, the inherent risk of regular visits to CF outpatient centers (which in Germany usually have very high hygiene

## STATEMENT

standards) should be weighed against the benefit of an often significantly improved lung function and lower exacerbation rate.<sup>77</sup> It is unnecessary for patients who show no signs of COVID-19 to stay at home permanently (and this is also not reasonable considering the many positive aspects of physical exercise). However, the RKI's behavioral recommendations (AHA-L rules of physical distancing and hygiene) should be strictly observed. In summary, the potential damage caused by failing to adhere to the CF-specific routine measures appears to be greater than the potential damage caused by COVID-19. Page 6 | 18

**Question 6 (Interstitial lung disease): I am a 72-year-old pensioner with interstitial lung disease due to rheumatoid arthritis. I regularly take methotrexate (15 mg/week) and prednisolone (5 mg/day). I am on long-term oxygen therapy (2 liters of O<sub>2</sub>/min., administered via nasal cannula). Should I even dare leave the house during the coronavirus pandemic? Should I keep taking my medication? Should I continue oxygen therapy?**

**Answer 6:** Interstitial lung disease (ILD), especially pulmonary fibrosis, is believed to be associated with a higher risk of severe COVID-19. If hospitalization becomes necessary, ILD patients are at a significantly increased risk for a severe disease.<sup>78</sup> This is especially true for patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), particularly those with advanced disease stages or obesity. Even though there are limited data available, it should be considered that a temporary suspension of an otherwise indicated immunosuppressive therapy is associated with the risk of a worsening of the underlying condition (which will then require even higher-doses of immunosuppressive therapy). The indication for immunosuppression should be reviewed in all types of ILD (including sarcoidosis)<sup>79</sup> treated by immunosuppressive therapy. If a continuation of the therapy is indicated, it should be continued without modification at the lowest possible dose. Only if the patient or a household member tests positive for SARS-CoV-2, immunomodulators such as azathioprine or methotrexate should be discontinued temporarily (in accordance with the DGRh recommendations, see [www.dgrh.de](http://www.dgrh.de)) until clinical improvement is achieved. A prednisolone therapy should be continued at the lowest possible dose. Since antifibrotic agents in IPF protect against acute exacerbations that may develop in ILD in the context of a viral infection, this therapy should be continued. It is unnecessary for patients who show no signs of COVID-19 to stay at home permanently (and this is also not reasonable considering the many positive aspects of physical exercise). However, the RKI's behavioral recommendations (AHA-L rules of physical distancing and hygiene) should be strictly observed. Oxygen therapy should be continued without modification. There is still insufficient data regarding the nature, prognosis and therapy of COVID-19-induced ILD. Studies are currently being conducted in this regard. Whether an antifibrotic or steroid therapy might be useful in these cases is currently unclear.<sup>82</sup>

**Question 7 (Sarcoidosis): I am 43 years old, not overweight, and have always been a non-smoker. Two years ago, I was diagnosed with sarcoidosis with moderate lung and lymph node involvement. No other organ is affected. My lung function is normal. So far, I do not have to take medication to treat my sarcoidosis. Am I at a higher risk for severe COVID-19? Can I continue to go to work during the pandemic? What if my sarcoidosis worsens and I have to start taking regular medication? And can COVID-19 make my sarcoidosis worse?**

**Answer 7:** In a study from New York, sarcoidosis was not an independent risk factor for severe COVID-19. The risk was, however, increased in patients with moderately or severely impaired lung function.<sup>83</sup> An

## STATEMENT

international registry study on 600 COVID-19 patients suffering from chronic inflammatory systemic diseases (including 10 patients with sarcoidosis) identified a higher risk of hospitalization for patients on glucocorticoid therapy receiving treatment with  $\geq 10$  mg prednisolone equivalent per day, but not for patients on biologics, DMARDs or NSAIDs<sup>84</sup> (in a subsequent analysis, the authors identified no risk of severe disease progression in 41 sarcoidosis patients in relation to the glucocorticoid therapy).<sup>85</sup> The key factors regarding the risk for patients with sarcoidosis are: 1) impaired lung function, 2) extrapulmonary organ involvement, 3) comorbidities, and 4) ongoing immunosuppressive therapy. In accordance with the recommendations of the European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR) and of the German Society of Rheumatology (DGRh) ([www.dgrh.de](http://www.dgrh.de)) regarding the treatment of rheumatic conditions as well as the sarcoidosis-specific recommendations of an international panel of sarcoidosis experts, we recommend continuing immunosuppressive or immunomodulatory therapy at the lowest effective dose in patients with clinically stable sarcoidosis who do not have COVID-19. However, the indication for a therapy should be subject to a strict review. These patients can also continue to go to work as long as the RKI's behavioral recommendations (AHA-L rules of physical distancing and hygiene) are observed. In patients with active disease or impending organ complications, the initiation/continuation of immunosuppressive or immunomodulatory therapy should be carefully assessed under risk-benefit aspects. In most cases, however, it should be initiated or continued. In patients with sarcoidosis and acute COVID-19 disease, immunosuppressive or immunomodulatory sarcoidosis therapy should be suspended. If the decision is made to continue prednisolone, the therapy should be reduced to the lowest possible effective maintenance dose. This does not affect the indication and timing of a COVID-19-specific dexamethasone therapy.<sup>79,86</sup>

**Question 8 (Lung transplant):** I am 53 years old and received a double lung transplant 3 years ago. I regularly take numerous medications and pay close attention to all recommendations regarding my diet and lifestyle. Can I leave the house during the coronavirus pandemic? Should I continue taking all these medications as before?

**Answer 8:** To date, there is no published data indicating that lung transplant patients are infected more frequently with SARS-CoV-2. The risk of severe COVID-19 in patients with lung transplants appears to be increased due to the required immunosuppression therapy. On the other hand, *in vitro* data for ciclosporine and tacrolimus indicate that both drugs have an inhibitory effect on virus replication. Several case series on patients with lung transplants with COVID-19 have been published so far. The first case published worldwide was of a German patient with COVID-19 after lung transplantation who had a moderate course.<sup>87</sup> In a case series including 90 organ transplant patients with COVID-19 from New York (of which 17 had lung transplants), 76% of patients were hospitalized, 24% were intubated, and 18% died.<sup>88</sup> In other case series of transplant patients who had COVID-19 (which did not, however, include patients with lung transplants) 25–28% of those infected died,<sup>89–91</sup> including 2 patients who were not initially thought to require hospitalization.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, increased attention is required for transplant patients on days 7–10 after symptom onset, even if the clinical symptoms are initially mild (**Fig. 1**). A prophylactic adjustment of the immunosuppressive therapy is not recommended in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, and this is also not generally recommended for lung transplanted patients with SARS-CoV-2. Only in case of COVID-19, a temporary discontinuation of mycophenolate mofetil and azathioprine is recommended under close in-hospital monitoring. Interactions of immunosuppressants, antivirals, and additional medication administered to treat COVID-19 need to be considered when treating patients with lung transplants. It is unnecessary for these patients to

## STATEMENT

stay at home permanently (and this is also not reasonable considering the many positive aspects of physical exercise). However, the RKI's behavioral recommendations (AHA-L rules of physical distancing and hygiene) should be strictly observed. Patients with lung transplants should discuss with their transplantation center whether FFP-2 masks should be used for personal protection in special risk situations. Page 8 | 18

**Question 9 (Lung cancer): I am a pensioner. I am 71 years old and have lung cancer. I am currently undergoing outpatient chemotherapy. One bone metastasis was treated with radiation therapy 3 months ago; the treatment of another is pending. Should chemotherapy be continued during the current coronavirus pandemic? Should radiation therapy take place? May my children visit me?**

**Answer 9:** Based on current knowledge, cancer patients, in general, are at a higher risk of developing severe COVID-19.<sup>92-97</sup> Data on the course of the infection from over one thousand patients with COVID-19 were collected in a major international scientific database (TERAVOLT: <http://teravolt-consortium.org>).<sup>98,99</sup> A first analysis of this database shows that severe COVID-19 courses (32% of patients recorded in the database died from COVID-19) are associated with factors such as poor general health (the most significant risk factor), advanced age, glucocorticoid therapy, current smoking, advanced disease stage, and the type of therapy.<sup>100,101</sup> These risk factors were confirmed by evaluating 105 SARS-CoV-2-infected patients with lung cancer from New York (in this case series, 62% of the patients were hospitalized, 25% of the patients died).<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, it was hypothesized that, in some patients, immunosuppression as part of the cancer therapy might prevent the massive cytokine release typical of severe COVID-19 and, thus, counteract progression to a severe disease state.<sup>103</sup> Due to the many different subtypes of cancer, cancer stages, therapies and prognoses, and the range of lung cancer types, a risk assessment and recommendation can only be made on a case-by-case basis. In general, surgeries, systemic therapies, or radiotherapy are vital for patients and should, therefore, neither be postponed nor canceled.<sup>104</sup> The DGHO ([www.dgho.de](http://www.dgho.de)) and ESMO ([www.esmo.org](http://www.esmo.org)) have issued separate recommendations for the treatment of cancer in the context of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, with the latter providing highly specific, hierarchically structured recommendations (three graded levels) for diagnostics and all types of local/systemic tumor therapies in lung cancer. In addition, detailed recommendations for the treatment, diagnosis, and management of patients with lung cancer and other malignant diseases were developed and discussed in an ESMO consensus statement.<sup>105</sup> The RKI's behavioral recommendations (rules of physical distancing and hygiene) also apply for patients with lung cancer and should also be strictly observed by all visitors. Regarding contact restrictions, the decision whether visits by relatives or friends should be allowed should be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the patient's prognosis; a general ban on visits is not appropriate.

**Question 10 (Sleep apnea syndrome): I am 74 years old and weigh 120 kg. I never smoked and, apart from high blood pressure, have no other conditions. In the past, I used to feel extremely exhausted when I woke up in the morning and was very tired during the day. Since regularly using my CPAP therapy, I feel refreshed when I wake up in the morning and am able to work in my garden all day. Do I belong to a high-risk group for severe coronavirus disease? Will I soon be able to host a barbecue party in my garden again?**

**Answer 10:** For patients with obstructive sleep apnea syndrome who need to use CPAP therapy every night, an increased risk can neither be excluded nor confirmed based on currently available data. In addition, a

## STATEMENT

statement issued by the German Sleep Society (DGSM) notes that there is no conclusive evidence on whether CPAP therapy may worsen a COVID-19 infection: The therapy should, therefore, be continued.<sup>106</sup> However, the combination of obesity and arterial hypertension is generally associated with an increased risk of severe COVID-19.<sup>6,21-28</sup> The RKI's behavioral recommendations (rules of physical distancing and hygiene) should therefore be strictly observed, and parties or social gatherings with friends should be avoided for the time being. The coronavirus pandemic should also be seen as an opportunity to tackle weight reduction, which offers many benefits in every respect. Page 9 | 18

**Question 11 (Neuromuscular disease):** I am 62 years old and suffer from a rare neuronal disease. I require ventilation via a mask every night because my respiration at night does not supply my lungs with sufficient oxygen. If I had coronavirus, would I even stand a chance of recovering and having my previous life back? Maybe I shouldn't even allow being placed in an intensive care unit at all?

**Answer 11:** Patients with neuromuscular diseases who require non-invasive ventilation (NIV) suffer from a severe ventilatory insufficiency. Although epidemiological data in the context of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic are not yet available for this patient group, a significantly increased risk of severe COVID-19 must be assumed, as these patients lack ventilatory compensation capacity in COVID-19 pneumonia. Therefore, these patients may need to be intubated earlier as long as no therapy goal restrictions apply. On the other hand, a transfer to the intensive care unit does not necessarily have to involve intubation. A graduated concept can be applied in this case, including alternating oxygen administration via nasal high-flow and intensified NIV to avoid intubation.<sup>7,107</sup> In the case of invasive ventilation, significant problems can be expected when weaning these patients from the respirator. This further impacts their prognosis, even if ventilation in intensive care is primarily successful.<sup>108</sup> These patients' quality of life may already be reduced by the underlying condition and may even be further impaired after suffering an extended period of COVID-19 pneumonia. This should be discussed in detail on a case-by-case basis.<sup>109</sup> Patients should be encouraged to draw up a comprehensive and specific advance directive after consultation with their attending respiratory physician and after careful consideration.

**Question 12 (Tuberculosis):** I am 43 years old and had pulmonary tuberculosis 20 years ago. The condition was treated over 6 months with a combination of different pills. Several x-ray images of my lungs were taken afterwards, and my doctors confirmed that the tuberculosis has healed without sequelae. I have had no symptoms since then. Does this history make me a risk patient for severe COVID-19? Would I be a risk patient if I were currently taking tuberculosis medication?

**Answer 12:** There is little data on SARS-CoV-2 infections in patients who have recovered from tuberculosis. The likelihood of developing severe COVID-19 after a successfully treated tuberculosis without persistent lung damage is probably not increased. However, if tuberculosis has led to lung damage such as bronchiectasis, fibrosis, or COPD,<sup>110,111</sup> an increased risk of severe COVID-19 cannot be excluded (see also answers to questions 1, 4, 5, and 6 of this statement). Published data suggest a more severe COVID-19 course in patients infected with SARS-CoV-2 during active tuberculosis.<sup>112-114</sup> However, due to the small number of published cases, we are not yet in a position to provide a definite statement. In addition, comorbidities need to be taken into consideration.<sup>115</sup> For the success of tuberculosis therapy, it is of utmost importance that patients keep all necessary doctor's appointments and avoid therapy interruptions, especially given the challenges

## STATEMENT

of the current pandemic.<sup>116</sup> Therefore, both the German Central Committee for the Control of Tuberculosis (DZK)<sup>117</sup> and the WHO (<https://www.who.int/teams/global-tuberculosis-programme/covid-19>) strictly recommend continuing treatment of tuberculosis in the context of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Epidemiologic data have led to the hypothesis that vaccination against tuberculosis (BCG) may protect against SARS-CoV-2 infections and severe courses of the disease.<sup>118-120</sup> Heterologous protective effects against other virus infections have been described.<sup>121</sup> However, whether these can also be assumed for SARS-CoV-2 has not yet been proven and is currently being investigated in studies. Page 10 | 18

**Question 13 (Pulmonary embolism): I am 61 years old, not overweight, and have always been a non-smoker. Three years ago, I was diagnosed with a pulmonary embolism. No trigger or genetic cause was identified. Until two years ago, I took an anticoagulant; I have not had another pulmonary embolism since then. I read that coronavirus infection can cause pulmonary embolisms. Am I at a higher risk for severe COVID-19? Should I take the anticoagulant again, just in case?**

**Answer 13:** COVID-19 is associated with a significantly increased risk of thrombosis and pulmonary embolism.<sup>10,11,122-124</sup> Laboratory parameters indicative of a risk to develop blood clots as a result of the strong inflammatory response (including elevated d-dimers) were seen in over 50% of cases.<sup>5,125</sup> The percentage of patients with confirmed pulmonary embolisms, deep vein thrombosis, and/or micro-embolisms with subsequent organ dysfunction (e.g. of the kidneys, heart, central nervous system) is also high and on average 25%<sup>126-128</sup> (probably even higher<sup>123</sup>), though the data collected until now were obtained without a control group and are, therefore, not very robust. The mortality rate of hospitalized COVID-19 patients could be significantly reduced by early thrombosis prophylaxis.<sup>129</sup> Prophylactic anticoagulation is currently recommended for all hospitalized COVID-19 patients, irrespective of a history of thrombosis or embolism. In contrast, therapeutic anticoagulation is indicated in confirmed thrombosis/embolism and, in certain situations, in COVID-19 patients in intensive care (e.g., ECMO). An administration of semi-therapeutic doses of low-molecular heparin or even full anticoagulation may be considered for ICU patients depending on the clinical severity and procoagulatory activity (e.g., significantly elevated or increasing d-dimers).<sup>130-132</sup> According to currently available information, patients with a history of thrombosis or pulmonary embolism, who carry a higher risk of thrombosis, are not at an increased risk in the COVID-19 context (compared to the general population). As such, there is no indication for initiating a prophylactic antithrombotic therapy at home. Patients with a history of pulmonary embolism who are no longer taking anticoagulants should generally, and especially during the COVID-19 epidemic, pay attention to the general precautions (such as avoiding extended immobilization and ensuring adequate fluid intake). When presenting with suspected COVID-19 symptoms to their primary care physician or the emergency department of a hospital, it is of utmost importance that patients mention a history of pulmonary embolism or venous thrombosis so that, if the COVID-19 suspicion is confirmed and the patient is hospitalized, thrombosis prophylaxis can be initiated without delay.<sup>133,134</sup>

### Conclusion

We would like to reiterate that patients with chronic respiratory diseases should generally observe the RKI recommendations (AHA-L rules of physical distancing and hygiene) and follow the vaccination recommendations ([www.rki.de](http://www.rki.de)). With the start of the second lock-down in Germany in November 2020, the German

## STATEMENT

sports association for disabled people (DBS) and the German Airways League (DAL) initially recommended the temporary suspension of all sports-based rehabilitation, including outpatient breathing exercises for groups.<sup>135</sup> As long as distancing rules, hygiene rules, and patients' current symptoms are strictly observed (no participation of patients with any acute symptoms), exercises for people with chronic respiratory conditions in small groups are currently permitted in many of the federal states of Germany. Since the regulations of the federal states and regional health authorities in Germany may change at short notice, it is advisable to inquire with local authorities, especially health authorities, whether rehabilitation measures in small groups are permitted. If this is not the case, patients should continue to exercise at home. Group training with structured training programs (e.g., NASA, COBRA) that are conducted at medical offices should not take place at the moment. However, the owners of such practices can offer customized instruction (at least in inhalation techniques) and refer to future training dates. The German Airway League (DAL) is currently developing Internet-based training programs and offers comprehensive information for patients as well as training videos on inhalation techniques ([www.atemwegsliga.de](http://www.atemwegsliga.de)). Concerning the question of the clinical management of COVID-19, comprehensive, separate statements are available from both the DGP<sup>14</sup> and the RKI.<sup>130</sup>

Page 11 | 18

### Authors for the DGP

Prof. Dr. M. Lommatzsch (Medical University Rostock)  
Prof. Dr. Klaus F. Rabe (LungenClinic Großhansdorf)  
Prof. Dr. Christian Taube (Medical University Essen)  
Dr. Marcus Joest (Lung and Allergy Center Bonn)  
Prof. Dr. Michael Kreuter (Heidelberg University Hospital)  
Prof. Dr. Hubert Wirtz (Leipzig University Hospital)  
Dr. Torsten Gerriet Blum (Lung Hospital Heckeshorn, Helios Klinikum Emil von Behring, Berlin)  
Prof. Dr. Martin Kolditz (Dresden University Hospital)  
Dr. Hilte Geerdes-Fenge (Medical University Rostock)  
Dr. Ralf Otto-Knapp (German Central Committee against Tuberculosis, DZK)  
Dr. Brit Häcker (German Central Committee against Tuberculosis, DZK)  
Prof. Dr. Tom Schaberg (Rotenburg)  
PD Dr. Felix C. Ringshausen (Medical University Hanover)  
Prof. Dr. Claus F. Vogelmeier (Marburg University Hospital)  
PD Dr. Niels Reinmuth (Specialist Clinics of Munich-Gauting)  
Prof. Dr. Martin Reck (LungenClinic Großhansdorf)  
Prof. Dr. Jens Gottlieb (Medical University Hanover)  
Prof. Dr. Stavros Konstantinides (Medical University Mainz)  
Prof. Dr. F. Joachim Meyer (Harlaching and Bogenhausen, Hospitals Munich)  
Prof. Dr. Heinrich Worth (Pulmonology Practice Fürth)  
Prof. Dr. Wolfram Windisch (Hospital for Lung Diseases Cologne-Merheim)  
Prof. Dr. Tobias Welte (Medical University Hanover)  
Prof. Dr. Torsten Bauer (Lung Hospital Heckeshorn, Helios Klinikum Emil von Behring, Berlin)

# STATEMENT

## Abbreviations

Page 12 | 18

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| ACE inhibitor | Angiotensin- <b>Converting-Enzyme</b> inhibitor (a blood pressure lowering agent)   |
| AHA-L         | Rules of physical distancing and hygiene issued by Robert Koch Institute: Physical dist<br>giene measures, community masks, airing of indoor areas                          |
| BCG           | <b>Bacille Calmette-Guérin</b> (vaccine for tuberculosis)   |
| BdP           | German Association of Chest Physicians<br>( <b>Bundesverband der Pneumologen, Schlaf- und Beatmungsmediziner e.V.</b> )   |
| CF            | Cystic <b>Fibrosis</b> (at times also described as mucoviscidosis)  |
| CFTR          | Cystic <b>Fibrosis Transmembrane Conductance Regulator</b>  |
| COBRA         | Chronic <b>O</b> bstuctive <b>B</b> ronchitis with and without emphysema<br>Outpatient training program for patients living with COPD                                       |
| COVID-19      | <b>Corona Virus Disease 2019</b> (a disease caused by SARS-CoV-2)   |
| CPAP          | Continuous <b>P</b> ositive <b>A</b> irway <b>P</b> ressure (treatment of the sleep apnea syndrome)   |
| DAL           | German Airway League<br>( <b>Deutsche Atemwegsliga</b> )  |
| DGAKI         | German Society for Allergology and Clinical Immunology<br>( <b>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Allergologie und Klinische Immunologie</b> )                                       |
| DGHO          | German Society for Haematology and Medical Oncology<br>( <b>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hämatologie und Medizinische Onkologie</b> )  |
| DGP           | German Respiratory Society<br>( <b>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Pneumologie und Beatmungsmedizin</b> )   |
| DGRh          | German Society of Rheumatology<br>( <b>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Rheumatologie</b> ).   |
| DGSM          | German Sleep Society<br>( <b>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schlafforschung und Schlafmedizin</b> )  |
| DMARDs        | <b>D</b> isease- <b>m</b> odifying <b>a</b> nti-rheumatic <b>d</b> rugs (special medication to treat rheumatism)  |
| DZK           | German Central Committee against Tuberculosis<br>( <b>Deutsches Zentralkomitee zur Bekämpfung der Tuberkulose</b> )   |
| ECMO          | <b>E</b> xtracorporeal <b>m</b> embrane <b>o</b> xxygenation  |
| ESMO          | <b>E</b> uropean <b>S</b> ociety for <b>M</b> edical <b>O</b> ncology   |
| EULAR         | <b>E</b> uropean <b>L</b> eaue <b>A</b> gainst <b>R</b> heumatism   |
| GINA          | <b>G</b> lobal <b>I</b> nitiative for <b>A</b> sthma  |
| ICS           | Inhalative <b>C</b> ortico- <b>S</b> teroide (basic asthma therapy)   |
| ILD           | Interstitial <b>L</b> ung <b>D</b> isease   |
| IPF           | Idiopathic <b>P</b> ulmonary <b>F</b> ibrosis   |
| NASA          | National outpatient training program for adults living with asthma<br>( <b>N</b> ationales <b>A</b> mbulantes <b>S</b> chulungsprogramm für erwachsene <b>A</b> sthmatiker) |

## STATEMENT

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| NIV        | Non-Invasive Ventilation (via mask)                            |
| NSAR       | Non-steroidal anti-rheumatic drugs                             |
| NVL        | National Healthcare Guideline (Nationale Versorgungsleitlinie) |
| RKI        | Robert Koch Institute  |
| SARS-CoV-2 | Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona-Virus 2               |
| WHO        | World Health Organisation                                      |

### References

1. Buitrago-Garcia D, Egli-Gany D, Counotte MJ, et al. Occurrence and transmission potential of asymptomatic and presymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infections: A living systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLoS Med.* 2020;17(9):e1003346.
2. Robert-Koch-Institut (RKI). [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges\\_Coronavirus/Situationsberichte/Gesamt.html](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Situationsberichte/Gesamt.html). 2020.
3. He X, Lau EHY, Wu P, et al. Temporal dynamics in viral shedding and transmissibility of COVID-19. *Nat Med.* 2020;26(5):672-675.
4. Gandhi RT, Lynch JB, Del Rio C. Mild or Moderate Covid-19. *N Engl J Med.* 2020;383(18):1757-1766.
5. Berlin DA, Gulick RM, Martinez FJ. Severe Covid-19. *N Engl J Med.* 2020. In press.
6. Karagiannidis C, Mostert C, Hentschker C, et al. Case characteristics, resource use, and outcomes of 10 021 patients with COVID-19 admitted to 920 German hospitals: an observational study. *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine.* 2020;8(9):853-862.
7. Windisch W, Weber-Carstens S, Kluge S, Rossaint R, Welte T, Karagiannidis C. Invasive and Non-Invasive Ventilation in Patients With COVID-19. *Dtsch Arztebl Int.* 2020;117(31-32):528-533.
8. Kluge S, Janssens U, Welte T, et al. [German recommendations for treatment of critically ill patients with COVID-19-version 3 : S1-guideline]. *Anaesthesist.* 2020;69(9):653-664.
9. Ackermann M, Verleden SE, Kuehnel M, et al. Pulmonary Vascular Endothelialitis, Thrombosis, and Angiogenesis in Covid-19. *N Engl J Med.* 2020;383(2):120-128.
10. Bilaloglu S, Aphinyanaphongs Y, Jones S, Iturrate E, Hochman J, Berger JS. Thrombosis in Hospitalized Patients With COVID-19 in a New York City Health System. *JAMA.* 2020;324(8):799-801.
11. Nicolai L, Leunig A, Brambs S, et al. Immunothrombotic Dysregulation in COVID-19 Pneumonia Is Associated With Respiratory Failure and Coagulopathy. *Circulation.* 2020;142(12):1176-1189.
12. Sokolowska M, Lukasik ZM, Agache I, et al. Immunology of COVID-19: Mechanisms, clinical outcome, diagnostics, and perspectives-A report of the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI). *Allergy.* 2020;75(10):2445-2476.
13. Schmidt M, Hajage D, Lebreton G, et al. Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation for severe acute respiratory distress syndrome associated with COVID-19: a retrospective cohort study. *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine.* 2020;8(11):1121-1131.
14. Pfeifer M, Ewig S, Voshaar T, et al. [Position Paper for the State of the Art Application of Respiratory Support in Patients with COVID-19 - German Respiratory Society]. *Pneumologie.* 2020;74(6):337-357.
15. Kolditz M, Tesch F, Mocke L, Höffken G, Ewig S, Schmitt J. Burden and risk factors of ambulatory or hospitalized CAP: A population based cohort study. *Respir Med.* 2016;121:32-38.
16. Salje H, Tran Kiem C, Lefrancq N, et al. Estimating the burden of SARS-CoV-2 in France. *Science.* 2020;369(6500):208-211.
17. Gudbjartsson DF, Norddahl GL, Melsted P, et al. Humoral Immune Response to SARS-CoV-2 in Iceland. *N Engl J Med.* 2020;383(18):1724-1734.
18. Pastor-Barriuso Rea. Infection fatality risk for SARS-CoV-2: a nationwide seroepidemiological study in the non-institutionalized population of Spain. <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/101101/2020080620169722v2>. 2020.
19. Ward Hea. Antibody prevalence for SARS-CoV-2 in England following first peak of the pandemic: REACT2 study in 100,000 adults. <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/101101/2020081220173690v2>. 2020.

## STATEMENT

20. Rajgor DD, Lee MH, Archuleta S, Bagdasarian N, Quek SC. The many estimates of the COVID-19 case fatality rate. *Lancet Infect Dis.* 2020;20(7):776-777. Page 14 | 18
21. Williamson EJ, Walker AJ, Bhaskaran K, et al. Factors associated with COVID-19-related death using OpenSAFELY. *Nature.* 2020;584(7821):430-436.
22. Knight SR, Ho A, Pius R, et al. Risk stratification of patients admitted to hospital with covid-19 using the ISARIC WHO Clinical Characterisation Protocol: development and validation of the 4C Mortality Score. *BMJ.* 2020;370:m3339.
23. Docherty AB, Harrison EM, Green CA, et al. Features of 20 133 UK patients in hospital with covid-19 using the ISARIC WHO Clinical Characterisation Protocol: prospective observational cohort study. *BMJ.* 2020;369:m1985.
24. Petrilli CM, Jones SA, Yang J, et al. Factors associated with hospital admission and critical illness among 5279 people with coronavirus disease 2019 in New York City: prospective cohort study. *BMJ.* 2020;369:m1966.
25. Nachtigall I, Lenga P, Jóźwiak K, et al. Clinical course and factors associated with outcomes among 1904 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 in Germany: an observational study. *Clin Microbiol Infect.* 2020.
26. Clift AK, Coupland CAC, Keogh RH, et al. Living risk prediction algorithm (QCOVID) for risk of hospital admission and mortality from coronavirus 19 in adults: national derivation and validation cohort study. *BMJ.* 2020;371:m3731.
27. Zádori N, Vánca S, Farkas N, Hegyi P, Erőss B. The negative impact of comorbidities on the disease course of COVID-19. *Intensive Care Med.* 2020;46(9):1784-1786.
28. Chen R, Liang W, Jiang M, et al. Risk Factors of Fatal Outcome in Hospitalized Subjects With Coronavirus Disease 2019 From a Nationwide Analysis in China. *Chest.* 2020;158(1):97-105.
29. Richardson S, Hirsch JS, Narasimhan M, et al. Presenting Characteristics, Comorbidities, and Outcomes Among 5700 Patients Hospitalized With COVID-19 in the New York City Area. *JAMA.* 2020;323(20):2052-2059.
30. Arons MM, Hatfield KM, Reddy SC, et al. Presymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 Infections and Transmission in a Skilled Nursing Facility. *N Engl J Med.* 2020;382(22):2081-2090.
31. Izquierdo JL, Almonacid C, González Y, et al. The Impact of COVID-19 on Patients with Asthma. *Eur Respir J.* 2020. In press.
32. Calmes D, Graff S, Maes N, et al. Asthma and COPD Are Not Risk Factors for ICU Stay and Death in Case of SARS-CoV2 Infection. *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology In practice.* 2020. In press.
33. Grandbastien M, Piotin A, Godet J, et al. SARS-CoV-2 Pneumonia in Hospitalized Asthmatic Patients Did Not Induce Severe Exacerbation. *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology In practice.* 2020;8(8):2600-2607.
34. Santos MM, Lucena EES, Lima KC, Brito AAC, Bay MB, Bonfada D. Survival and predictors of deaths of patients hospitalised due to COVID-19 from a retrospective and multicentre cohort study in Brazil. *Epidemiol Infect.* 2020;148:e198.
35. Avdeev S, Moiseev S, Brovko M, et al. Low prevalence of bronchial asthma and chronic obstructive lung disease among intensive care unit patients with COVID-19. *Allergy.* 2020;75(10):2703-2704.
36. Abe K, Miyawaki A, Nakamura M, Ninomiya H, Kobayashi Y. Trends in hospitalizations for asthma during the COVID-19 outbreak in Japan. *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology In practice.* 2020. In press.
37. Chhiba KD, Patel GB, Vu THT, et al. Prevalence and characterization of asthma in hospitalized and nonhospitalized patients with COVID-19. *J Allergy Clin Immunol.* 2020;146(2):307-314.e304.
38. Lieberman-Cribbin W, Rapp J, Alpert N, Tuminello S, Taioli E. The Impact of Asthma on Mortality in Patients With COVID-19. *Chest.* 2020. In press.
39. Lovinsky-Desir S, Deshpande DR, De A, et al. Asthma among hospitalized patients with COVID-19 and related outcomes. *J Allergy Clin Immunol.* 2020;146(5):1027-1034.e1024.
40. Robinson LB, Fu X, Bassett IV, et al. COVID-19 severity in hospitalized patients with asthma: A matched cohort study. *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology In practice.* 2020. In press.
41. Rosenthal JA, Awan SF, Fintzi J, Keswani A, Ein D. Asthma Is Associated with Increased Risk of Intubation but Not Hospitalization or Death in COVID-19. *Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol.* 2020.
42. Wang L, Foer D, Bates DW, Boyce JA, Zhou L. Risk factors for hospitalization, intensive care, and mortality among patients with asthma and COVID-19. *J Allergy Clin Immunol.* 2020;146(4):808-812.
43. Lommatzsch M, Stoll P, Virchow JC. COVID-19 in a patient with severe asthma treated with Omalizumab. *Allergy.* 2020;75(10):2705-2708.
44. Renner A, Marth K, Patocka K, Pohl W. COVID-19 in a severe eosinophilic asthmatic receiving benralizumab - a case study. *J Asthma.* 2020:1-3.
45. Förster-Ruhrmann U, Szczepek AJ, Bachert C, Olze H. COVID-19 in a patient with severe chronic rhinosinusitis with nasal polyps during therapy with dupilumab. *J Allergy Clin Immunol.* 2020;146(1):218-220.e212.
46. Hanon S, Brusselle G, Deschamphelleire M, et al. COVID-19 and biologics in severe asthma: data from the Belgian Severe Asthma Registry. *Eur Respir J.* 2020.

## STATEMENT

47. Haroun-Díaz E, Vázquez de la Torre M, Ruano FJ, et al. Severe asthma during the COVID-19 pandemic: Clinical observations. *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology In practice*. 2020;8(8):2787-2789. Page 15 | 18
48. Antonicelli L, Tontini C, Manzotti G, et al. Severe asthma in adults does not significantly affect the outcome of COVID-19 disease: Results from the Italian Severe Asthma Registry. *Allergy*. 2020. In press.
49. Matucci A, Caminati M, Vivarelli E, et al. COVID-19 in severe asthmatic patients during ongoing treatment with biologicals targeting type 2 inflammation: Results from a multicenter Italian survey. *Allergy*. 2020.
50. Bhalla A, Mukherjee M, Radford K, et al. Dupilumab, severe asthma airway responses, and SARS-CoV-2 serology. *Allergy*. 2020. In press.
51. Yang JM, Koh HY, Moon SY, et al. Allergic disorders and susceptibility to and severity of COVID-19: A nationwide cohort study. *J Allergy Clin Immunol*. 2020;146(4):790-798.
52. Choi YJ, Park JY, Lee HS, et al. Effect of Asthma and Asthma Medication on the Prognosis of Patients with COVID-19. *Eur Respir J*. 2020. In press.
53. Wang Y, Ao G, Qi X, Xie B. The association between COVID-19 and asthma: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Clin Exp Allergy*. 2020;50(11):1274-1277.
54. Yao Y, Wang H, Liu Z. Expression of ACE2 in airways: Implication for COVID-19 risk and disease management in patients with chronic inflammatory respiratory diseases. *Clin Exp Allergy*. 2020. In press.
55. Farne H, Singanayagam A. Why asthma might surprisingly protect against poor outcomes in COVID-19. *Eur Respir J*. 2020. In press.
56. Keswani A, Dhana K, Rosenthal JA, Moore D, Mahdavinia M. Atopy is predictive of a decreased need for hospitalization for coronavirus disease 2019. *Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol*. 2020;125(4):479-481.
57. Matusiak M, Schürch CM. Expression of SARS-CoV-2 entry receptors in the respiratory tract of healthy individuals, smokers and asthmatics. *Respir Res*. 2020;21(1):252.
58. Jackson DJ, Busse WW, Bacharier LB, et al. Association of Respiratory Allergy, Asthma and Expression of the SARS-CoV-2 Receptor, ACE2. *J Allergy Clin Immunol*. 2020. In press.
59. Hegde S. Does asthma make COVID-19 worse? *Nat Rev Immunol*. 2020. In press.
60. Bradding P, Richardson M, Hinks TSC, et al. ACE2, TMPRSS2, and furin gene expression in the airways of people with asthma-implications for COVID-19. *J Allergy Clin Immunol*. 2020;146(1):208-211.
61. Camiolo M, Gauthier M, Kaminski N, Ray A, Wenzel SE. Expression of SARS-CoV-2 receptor ACE2 and coincident host response signature varies by asthma inflammatory phenotype. *J Allergy Clin Immunol*. 2020;146(2):315-324.e317.
62. Kimura H, Francisco D, Conway M, et al. Type 2 inflammation modulates ACE2 and TMPRSS2 in airway epithelial cells. *J Allergy Clin Immunol*. 2020;146(1):80-88.e88.
63. Schultze A, Walker AJ, MacKenna B, et al. Risk of COVID-19-related death among patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or asthma prescribed inhaled corticosteroids: an observational cohort study using the OpenSAFELY platform. *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*. 2020;8(11):1106-1120.
64. Peters MC, Sajuthi S, Deford P, et al. COVID-19 Related Genes in Sputum Cells in Asthma: Relationship to Demographic Features and Corticosteroids. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med*. 2020. In press.
65. Maes T, Bracke K, Brusselle GG. COVID-19, Asthma, and Inhaled Corticosteroids (ICS): Another Beneficial Effect of ICS? *Am J Respir Crit Care Med*. 2020. In press.
66. Klimek L, Jutel M, Akdis C, et al. Handling of allergen immunotherapy in the COVID-19 pandemic: An ARIA-EAACI statement. *Allergy*. 2020. In press.
67. Carugno A, Gambini DM, Raponi F, et al. COVID-19 and biologics for psoriasis: a high-epidemic area experience - Bergamo, Lombardy, Italy. *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2020. In press.
68. Monti S, Balduzzi S, Delvino P, Bellis E, Quadrelli VS, Montecucco C. Clinical course of COVID-19 in a series of patients with chronic arthritis treated with immunosuppressive targeted therapies. *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2020;79(5):667-668.
69. Maijers I, Kearns N, Harper J, Weatherall M, Beasley R. Oral steroid-sparing effect of high-dose inhaled corticosteroids in asthma. *Eur Respir J*. 2020;55(1).
70. Alqahtani JS, Oyelade T, Aldhahir AM, et al. Prevalence, Severity and Mortality associated with COPD and Smoking in patients with COVID-19: A Rapid Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *PLoS One*. 2020;15(5):e0233147.
71. Peng Y, Meng K, He M, et al. Clinical Characteristics and Prognosis of 244 Cardiovascular Patients Suffering From Coronavirus Disease in Wuhan, China. *J Am Heart Assoc*. 2020;9(19):e016796.
72. Zhang P, Zhu L, Cai J, et al. Association of Inpatient Use of Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme Inhibitors and Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers With Mortality Among Patients With Hypertension Hospitalized With COVID-19. *Circ Res*. 2020;126(12):1671-1681.
73. Fosbøl EL, Butt JH, Østergaard L, et al. Association of Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme Inhibitor or Angiotensin Receptor Blocker Use With COVID-19 Diagnosis and Mortality. *JAMA*. 2020;324(2):168-177.

## STATEMENT

74. Colombo C, Burgel PR, Gartner S, et al. Impact of COVID-19 on people with cystic fibrosis. *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*. 2020;8(5):e35-e36. Page 16 | 18
75. McClenaghan E, Cosgriff R, Brownlee K, et al. The global impact of SARS-CoV-2 in 181 people with cystic fibrosis. *J Cyst Fibros*. 2020. In press.
76. Ringshausen FC, Hellmuth T, Dittrich AM. [Evidence-based treatment of cystic fibrosis]. *Internist (Berl)*. 2020. In press.
77. Griese M, Costa S, Linnemann RW, et al. Safety and Efficacy of Elexacaftor/Tezacaftor/Ivacaftor for  $\geq 24$  Weeks in People With CF and  $\geq 1$  F508del Allele: Interim Results of an Open-Label Phase Three Clinical Trial. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med*. 2020. In press.
78. Drake TM, Docherty AB, Harrison EM, et al. Outcome of Hospitalization for COVID-19 in Patients with Interstitial Lung Disease: An International Multicenter Study. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med*. 2020. In press.
79. Sweiss NJ, Korsten P, Syed HJ, et al. When the Game Changes: Guidance to Adjust Sarcoidosis Management During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic. *Chest*. 2020;158(3):892-895.
80. Collard HR, Richeldi L, Kim DS, et al. Acute exacerbations in the INPULSIS trials of nintedanib in idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. *Eur Respir J*. 2017;49(5).
81. Ley B, Swigris J, Day BM, et al. Pirfenidone Reduces Respiratory-related Hospitalizations in Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med*. 2017;196(6):756-761.
82. George PM, Wells AU, Jenkins RG. Pulmonary fibrosis and COVID-19: the potential role for antifibrotic therapy. *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*. 2020;8(8):807-815.
83. Morgenthau AS, Levin MA, Freeman R, Reich DL, Klang E. Moderate or Severe Impairment in Pulmonary Function is Associated with Mortality in Sarcoidosis Patients Infected with SARS-CoV-2. *Lung*. 2020;198(5):771-775.
84. Gianfrancesco M, Hyrich KL, Al-Adely S, et al. Characteristics associated with hospitalisation for COVID-19 in people with rheumatic disease: data from the COVID-19 Global Rheumatology Alliance physician-reported registry. *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2020;79(7):859-866.
85. Gianfrancesco M, Hyrich KL, Yazdany J, Machado PM, Robinson PC. Response to: 'Glucocorticoid-induced relapse of COVID-19 in a patient with sarcoidosis' by Györfi et al. *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2020. In press.
86. Landewé RB, Machado PM, Kroon F, et al. EULAR provisional recommendations for the management of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases in the context of SARS-CoV-2. *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2020;79(7):851-858.
87. Aigner C, Dittmer U, Kamler M, Collaud S, Taube C. COVID-19 in a lung transplant recipient. *The Journal of Heart and Lung Transplantation*.
88. Pereira MR, Mohan S, Cohen DJ, et al. COVID-19 in Solid Organ Transplant Recipients: Initial Report from the US Epicenter. *Am J Transplant*. 2020.
89. Fernandez-Ruiz M, Andres A, Loinaz C, et al. COVID-19 in solid organ transplant recipients: a single-center case series from Spain. *Am J Transplant*. 2020.
90. Akalin E, Azzi Y, Bartash R, et al. Covid-19 and Kidney Transplantation. *N Engl J Med*. 2020.
91. Latif F, Farr MA, Clerkin KJ, et al. Characteristics and Outcomes of Recipients of Heart Transplant With Coronavirus Disease 2019. *JAMA Cardiol*. 2020.
92. Liang W, Guan W, Chen R, et al. Cancer patients in SARS-CoV-2 infection: a nationwide analysis in China. *The Lancet Oncology*. 2020;21(3):335-337.
93. Tian J, Yuan X, Xiao J, et al. Clinical characteristics and risk factors associated with COVID-19 disease severity in patients with cancer in Wuhan, China: a multicentre, retrospective, cohort study. *The Lancet Oncology*. 2020;21(7):893-903.
94. Kuderer NM, Choueiri TK, Shah DP, et al. Clinical impact of COVID-19 on patients with cancer (CCC19): a cohort study. *Lancet*. 2020;395(10241):1907-1918.
95. Albiges L, Foulon S, Bayle A, et al. Determinants of the outcomes of patients with cancer infected with SARS-CoV-2: results from the Gustave Roussy cohort. *Nature Cancer*. 2020;1(10):965-975.
96. Ruge M, Zorzi M, Guzzinati S. SARS-CoV-2 infection in the Italian Veneto region: adverse outcomes in patients with cancer. *Nature Cancer*. 2020;1(8):784-788.
97. Subbiah V. A global effort to understand the riddles of COVID-19 and cancer. *Nature Cancer*. 2020;1(10):943-945.
98. Garassino MC, Whisenant JG, Huang LC, et al. COVID-19 in patients with thoracic malignancies (TERAVOLT): first results of an international, registry-based, cohort study. *The Lancet Oncology*. 2020;21(7):914-922.
99. Whisenant JG, Trama A, Torri V, et al. TERAVOLT: Thoracic Cancers International COVID-19 Collaboration. *Cancer Cell*. 2020;37(6):742-745.
100. Horn L, Whisenant JG, Torri V, et al. Thoracic Cancers International COVID-19 Collaboration (TERAVOLT): Impact of type of cancer therapy and COVID therapy on survival. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. 2020;38(18\_suppl):LBA111-LBA111.

## STATEMENT

101. Baena Espinar J, Torri V, Whisenant J, et al. LBA75 Defining COVID-19 outcomes in thoracic cancer patients: TERA-VOLT (Thoracic cancer international COVID-19 collaboration). *Ann Oncol.* 2020;31:S1204-S1205. Page 17 | 18
102. Luo J, Rizvi H, Preeshagul IR, et al. COVID-19 in patients with lung cancer. *Ann Oncol.* 2020;31(10):1386-1396.
103. Sereno M, Gutierrez-Gutierrez G, Sandoval C, et al. A favorable outcome of pneumonia COVID-19 in an advanced lung cancer patient with severe neutropenia: Is immunosuppression a risk factor for SARS-CoV-2 infection? *Lung Cancer.* 2020.
104. Calabro L, Peters S, Soria JC, et al. Challenges in lung cancer therapy during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine.* 2020. In press.
105. Curigliano G, Banerjee S, Cervantes A, et al. Managing cancer patients during the COVID-19 pandemic: an ESMO multidisciplinary expert consensus. *Ann Oncol.* 2020;31(10):1320-1335.
106. Büchner N, Woehle H, Dellweg D, et al. [Management of diagnostic procedures and treatment of sleep related breathing disorders in the context of the coronavirus pandemic]. *Somnologie (Berl).* 2020:1-11.
107. Pfeifer M, Ewig S, Voshaar T, et al. Position Paper for the State-of-the-Art Application of Respiratory Support in Patients with COVID-19. *Respiration.* 2020;99(6):521-542.
108. Windisch W, Dellweg D, Geiseler J, et al. Prolonged Weaning from Mechanical Ventilation: Results from Specialized Weaning Centers. *Dtsch Arztebl Int* 2020;117:197-204.
109. Bajwah S, Wilcock A, Towers R, et al. Managing the supportive care needs of those affected by COVID-19. *Eur Respir J.* 2020;55(4).
110. Ravimohan S, Kornfeld H, Weissman D, Bisson GP. Tuberculosis and lung damage: from epidemiology to pathophysiology. *Eur Respir Rev.* 2018;27(147).
111. Gupte AN, Paradkar M, Selvaraju S, et al. Assessment of lung function in successfully treated tuberculosis reveals high burden of ventilatory defects and COPD. *PLoS One.* 2019;14(5):e0217289.
112. Tamuzi JL, Ayele BT, Shumba CS, et al. Implications of COVID-19 in high burden countries for HIV/TB: A systematic review of evidence. *BMC Infect Dis.* 2020;20(1):744.
113. Gupta N, Ish P, Gupta A, et al. A profile of a retrospective cohort of 22 patients with COVID-19 and active/treated tuberculosis. *Eur Respir J.* 2020;56(5).
114. Tadolini M, Codecasa LR, García-García JM, et al. Active tuberculosis, sequelae and COVID-19 co-infection: first cohort of 49 cases. *Eur Respir J.* 2020;56(1).
115. Ong CWM, Migliori GB, Raviglione M, et al. Epidemic and pandemic viral infections: impact on tuberculosis and the lung: A consensus by the World Association for Infectious Diseases and Immunological Disorders (WAidid), Global Tuberculosis Network (GTN), and members of the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Study Group for Mycobacterial Infections (ESGMYC). *Eur Respir J.* 2020;56(4).
116. Cilloni L, Fu H, Vesga JF, et al. The potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tuberculosis epidemic a modelling analysis. *EClinicalMedicine.* 2020;28:100603.
117. Otto-Knapp R, Häcker B, Breuer C, et al. [DZK Recommendations for Tuberculosis, BCG and COVID-19 in Germany - (Official Abbreviation of Coronavirus Disease 2019 Caused by the New Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2)]. *Pneumologie.* 2020;74(7):412-416.
118. O'Neill LAJ, Netea MG. BCG-induced trained immunity: can it offer protection against COVID-19? *Nat Rev Immunol.* 2020;20(6):335-337.
119. Curtis N, Sparrow A, Ghebreyesus TA, Netea MG. Considering BCG vaccination to reduce the impact of COVID-19. *Lancet.* 2020;395(10236):1545-1546.
120. Joy M, Malavika B, Asirvatham ES, Sudarsanam TD, Jeyaseelan L. Is BCG associated with reduced incidence of COVID-19? A meta-regression of global data from 160 countries. *Clin Epidemiol Glob Health.* 2020. In press.
121. Moorlag S, Arts RJW, van Crevel R, Netea MG. Non-specific effects of BCG vaccine on viral infections. *Clin Microbiol Infect.* 2019;25(12):1473-1478.
122. Middeldorp S, Coppens M, van Haaps TF, et al. Incidence of venous thromboembolism in hospitalized patients with COVID-19. *J Thromb Haemost.* 2020;18(8):1995-2002.
123. Wichmann D, Sperhake JP, Lütgehetmann M, et al. Autopsy Findings and Venous Thromboembolism in Patients With COVID-19: A Prospective Cohort Study. *Ann Intern Med.* 2020;173(4):268-277.
124. Menter T, Haslbauer JD, Nienhold R, et al. Postmortem examination of COVID-19 patients reveals diffuse alveolar damage with severe capillary congestion and variegated findings in lungs and other organs suggesting vascular dysfunction. *Histopathology.* 2020;77(2):198-209.
125. Zhou F, Yu T, Du R, et al. Clinical course and risk factors for mortality of adult inpatients with COVID-19 in Wuhan, China: a retrospective cohort study. *Lancet.* 2020;395(10229):1054-1062.
126. Lodigiani C, Iapichino G, Carenzo L, et al. Venous and arterial thromboembolic complications in COVID-19 patients admitted to an academic hospital in Milan, Italy. *Thromb Res.* 2020;191:9-14.
127. Klok FA, Kruip M, van der Meer NJM, et al. Incidence of thrombotic complications in critically ill ICU patients with COVID-19. *Thromb Res.* 2020;191:145-147.

## STATEMENT

128. Cui S, Chen S, Li X, Liu S, Wang F. Prevalence of venous thromboembolism in patients with severe novel coronavirus pneumonia. *J Thromb Haemost.* 2020;18(6):1421-1424. Page 18 | 18
129. Nadkarni GN, Lala A, Bagiella E, et al. Anticoagulation, Bleeding, Mortality, and Pathology in Hospitalized Patients With COVID-19. *J Am Coll Cardiol.* 2020;76(16):1815-1826.
130. Ständiger Arbeitskreis der Kompetenz- und Behandlungszentren für Krankheiten durch hochpathogene Erreger (STAKOB). Hinweise zu Erkennung, Diagnostik und Therapie von Patienten mit COVID-19. [https://pneumologie.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/COVID-19/20201105\\_STAKOB\\_Covid-19\\_Therapie\\_Diagnose.pdf](https://pneumologie.de/fileadmin/user_upload/COVID-19/20201105_STAKOB_Covid-19_Therapie_Diagnose.pdf). Stand: 05.11.2020.
131. Thachil J, Tang N, Gando S, et al. ISTH interim guidance on recognition and management of coagulopathy in COVID-19. *J Thromb Haemost.* 2020;18(5):1023-1026.
132. European Society of Cardiology (ESC). ESC Guidance for the Diagnosis and Management of CV Disease during the COVID-19 Pandemic. <https://www.escardio.org/Education/COVID-19-and-Cardiology/ESC-COVID-19-Guidance?hit=home&urlorig=/vgn-ext-templating>. 2020.
133. Gerotziafas GT, Catalano M, Colgan MP, et al. Guidance for the Management of Patients with Vascular Disease or Cardiovascular Risk Factors and COVID-19: Position Paper from VAS-European Independent Foundation in Angiology/Vascular Medicine. *Thromb Haemost.* 2020.
134. Bikdeli B, Madhavan MV, Jimenez D, et al. COVID-19 and Thrombotic or Thromboembolic Disease: Implications for Prevention, Antithrombotic Therapy, and Follow-Up: JACC State-of-the-Art Review. *J Am Coll Cardiol.* 2020;75(23):2950-2973.
135. Worth H, Bock R, Frisch M, et al. [Group Training of Patients with Chronic Lung Diseases under Outpatient Conditions - Recommendations of the Working Group Lung Sports in Germany and the German Airways League]. *Pneumologie.* 2020. In press.