

Shropshire primary school asthma survey: Spring 2005

by Michael Ryan BSc, C Eng, MICE

The co-operation of many Shropshire schools in providing data on asthma inhaler usage is greatly appreciated and results are summarised below.

It was intended to obtain data from each primary school in Wrekin Unitary Authority and Shropshire County, but not all schools were asked and as the data obtained reveals matters of significance with regard to public health, I have decided to publish the following summary, together with a map showing some of the results.

Approximately 60 primary schools in Shropshire, including all in Wrekin Unitary Authority, were asked to provide numbers of children in Years 3 to 6 and also the numbers of children in those years who bring inhalers to school for asthma. Some schools wrote to decline data and a significant minority made no response at all - despite the obligations of the Freedom of Information Act.

The research was part of a project to further test a known correlation between examination performance and life expectancy and data for whole LEAs are required. Childhood asthma rates are an accurate indicator of the general health of a community and primary school asthma surveys were recommended in "Airborne pollutants and acute health effects" [The Lancet, 8 April 1995] as a cheap and effective means of showing the prevalence of industrial PM2.5 pollution. The lack of official follow-up to the 1995 Lancet proposal shows the lack of any public health protection in the UK [unlike USA] as illustrated by the asthma results obtained in Shropshire, ten years later.

Percentage of children in Years 3 to 6 bringing inhalers to school for asthma	Number of schools
0% to under 5%	4
5% to under 10%	19
10% to under 15%	7
15% to under 20%	3
20% to under 80%	Nil
80% to 100%	2
Total number of schools who provided data:	35
Total number of pupils in sample:	5,221
Total number bringing asthma inhalers to school in sample:	456
Average percentage of pupils bringing inhalers to school for asthma:	8.7%

Prepared by Michael Ryan
27 June 2005

SHROPSHIRE ASTHMA SURVEY: Spring 2005

by Michael Ryan BSc, C Eng, MICE

Percentages of primary schoolchildren in Years 3 to 6,
who bring inhalers to school for asthma

[see "Airborne pollutants and acute health effects" by
Dr Dick van Steenis MBBS, The Lancet, Vol 345, 8 April 1995]

