

# Editorial

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Chronic cough (CC), a persistent symptom affecting a large number of people worldwide and a frequent reason for medical consultation, is defined as the presence of cough lasting more than eight weeks in adults and more than four weeks in children. Global prevalence is estimated to be approximately 10%, although the fact that a wide variety of terms are used in the clinical setting to describe cough makes it difficult to calculate its true prevalence.

The management of patients with CC is currently very heterogeneous in terms of diagnostic techniques and pharmacological treatments, while the fact that CC is usually based on a diagnosis of exclusion leads to a large number of tests and referrals between different specialists and levels of care.

In routine clinical practice, there is a low level of awareness and evaluation of the significant impact of CC on the lives of patients and of the individuals in their setting. While various tools are available to measure CC frequency and impact, they are rarely used in medical consultations, partly due to a lack of

knowledge of their existence among staff who lack of the corresponding expertise.

The imminent arrival of new drugs for refractory and idiopathic CC has reactivated interest in this topic in recent years and has promoted research, training, and the creation of multidisciplinary CC units. Some hospitals are already beginning to collaborate with neurology departments to try and better understand nervous dysregulation in CC and possible neurological diseases associated with idiopathic CC.

Despite the importance of CC, there are notable gaps in our full understanding of the underlying mechanisms and of effective therapeutic approaches. Research remains vital to identifying new management and treatment strategies and to improving diagnostic accuracy. The lack of a consensus on diagnostic criteria and the complexity of interactions between the various potential causes of CC highlight the need for a more integrated and collaborative approach to effectively addressing this health problem that involves health providers, researchers, and the pharmaceutical sector.

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This edition presents three reviews by internationally renowned CC expert groups. The work by Dr Domingo and coworkers underlines the importance of using correct terminology and of a better understanding of the pathophysiological mechanisms underlying CC. The review by Dr Oliveira and coworkers summarizes the impact of CC on various aspects of life (including physical and psychological functioning, social interactions, and work productivity), describes tools available

for measuring CC, and addresses treatment-related adverse events and mortality, while highlighting the importance of considering different CC phenotypes in patient management. Finally, the work by Dr Kimberley J Holt and coworkers describes, in terms of performance, applications, and future potential, various cough monitoring systems whose development is driven by new cough therapies and the need to detect and quantify CC episodes in patients.