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**Title:** 18-year follow-up of the epidemiological study on the genetics and environment of asthma (EGEA3): Study of the follow-up bias

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**Body:** Epidemiological cohorts of well-characterized adults on respiratory health are warranted to better understand the long-term evolution of asthma. In 1991-95, 2,047 participants were enrolled in the EGEA cohort (388 asthmatic cases, their first degree relatives, 415 controls). 12 years later (EGEA2), 1,845 participants (92.2%) of the initial population still alive had answered to a short self-completed questionnaire and 1,543 (77.1%) to the main questionnaire (+58 new family members). A 18-year follow-up of the EGEA cohort (EGEA3) through a self-completed questionnaire with detailed phenotypic, treatment and environmental exposure information has been initiated mid-2011 among the EGEA2 population still alive (n=1,966). As 02/2013, 1,455 returned the completed questionnaire (74%). Reminders are still ongoing to increase this response rate. Compared to EGEA3 participants, non-participants (n=511) were significantly

younger (35 vs 43 yrs), more often men (56 vs 49%), and without occupation (14 vs 10%). After adjustments for age and sex, only the difference for smoking remained significant. Non-participants reported more often ever asthma (50 vs 42%,  $p<0.01$ ) and had more often allergic sensitization at EGEA2 (64 vs 55%,  $p=0.01$ ), but after adjustments for age and sex, these differences became non significant. No difference was observed for FEV1, current asthma and asthma control. The 18-year follow-up of the EGEA cohort through a self-completed questionnaire has reached an excellent response rate, allowing to better characterize the temporal evolution of the disease, and to fully exploit the EGEA2 biobank. Supported by Aviesan ITMO Santé Publique, AGIR à dom, FRSSR.