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Title: Effects of exacerbation risk on symptoms and clinical characteristics in patients with bronchiectasis

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Body: Aim: Exacerbations may deteriorate symptoms and clinical features in patients with bronchiectasis. The purpose of this study was to investigate effects of exacerbation risk on muscle strength, exercise capacity, dyspnea, fatigue, and quality of life in patients with bronchiectasis. Methods: Fifteen low risk patients (0 exacerbation per year) and 15 high risk patients (≥ 1 exacerbations per year) participated in this study. Lung function, quadriceps muscle strength (hand held dynamometer), dyspnea (modified Medical Research Council dyspnea scale, MRC), fatigue (Fatigue Severity Scale, FSS), exercise capacity (six-minute walk test, 6MWT), and cough specific (Leicester Cough Questionnaire, LCQ) and general (Nottingham Health Profile, NHP) were determined. Results: No significant difference was found in lung function between the groups ($p > 0.05$). Number of females was significantly higher in high risk group as compared to low risk group ($p < 0.05$). Quadriceps muscle strength, 6MWT distance, and LCQ physical score were significantly lower; and MRC, FSS score, and NHP energy, emotional reactions, pain, physical mobility, and total scores were significantly higher in high risk bronchiectasis patients than those of low risk patients ($p < 0.05$). Conclusion: High risk of having exacerbations adversely effects quadriceps strength; exercise capacity, dyspnea and fatigue perception, and cough specific and general health in patients with bronchiectasis. Number of exacerbations in the previous year may be a determinant of characteristics and function in bronchiectasis.